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THE

THEORY

OF

MORAL SENTIMENTS.

VOL. II.

THE

THEORY

OF

MORAL SENTIMENTS;

OR,

An ESSAY towards an Analyſis of the Principles by which Men naturally judge concerning the Conduct and Character, firſt of their Neighbours, and afterwards of themſelves.

TO WHICH IS ADDED,

A Diſſertation on the Origin of Languages.

By ADAM SMITH, LL. D.

Fellow of the Royal Societies of London and Edinburgh; One of the Commiſſioners of his Majeſty's Cuſtoms in Scotland; and formerly Profeſſor of Moral Philoſophy in the Univerſity of Glaſgow.

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MORAL SENTIMENTS.

PART V.

Of the INFLUENCE of CUSTOM and FASHION upon the Sentiments of Moral Approbation and Diſapprobation.

Conſiſting of One Section.

CHAP. I.

Of the Influence of Cuſtom and Faſhion upon our notions of Beauty and Deformity.

THERE are other principles beſides thoſe already enumerated, which have a conſiderable influence upon the moral ſentiments of mankind, and are the

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chief cauſes of the many irregular and diſcordant opinions which prevail in different ages and nations concerning what is blameable or praiſe-worthy. Theſe principles are cuſtom and faſhion, principles which extend their dominion over our judgments concerning beauty of every kind.

When two objects have frequently been ſeen together, the imagination acquires a habit of paſſing eaſily from the one to the other. If the firſt appear, we lay our account that the ſecond is to follow. Of their own accord they put us in mind of one another, and the attention glides eaſily along them. Though, independent of cuſtom, there ſhould be no real beauty in their union, yet when cuſtom has thus connected them together, we feel an impropriety in their ſeparation. The one we think is awkward when it appears without its uſual companion. We miſs ſomething which we expected to find, and the habitual arrangement of our ideas is diſturbed by the diſappointment. A ſuit of clothes, for example, ſeems to want ſomething if they

are without the moſt inſignificant ornament which uſually accompanies them, and we find a meanneſs or awkwardneſs in the abſence even of a haunch button. When there is any natural propriety in the union, cuſtom increaſes our ſenſe of it, and makes a different arrangement appear ſtill more diſagreeable than it would otherwiſe ſeem to be. Thoſe who have been accuſtomed to ſee things in a good taſte, are more diſguſted by whatever is clumſy or awkward. Where the conjunction is improper, cuſtom either diminiſhes, or takes away altogether, our ſenſe of the impropriety. Thoſe who have been accuſtomed to ſlovenly diſorder loſe all ſenſe of neatneſs or elegance. The modes of furniture or dreſs which ſeem ridiculous to ſtrangers, give no offence to the people who are uſed to them.

Faſhion is different from cuſtom, or rather is a particular ſpecies of it. That is not the faſhion which every body wears, but which thoſe wear who are of a high rank, or character. The graceful, the eaſy, and commanding manners of the

great, joined to the uſual richneſs and magnificence of their dreſs, give a grace to the very form which they happen to beſtow upon it. As long as they continue to uſe this form, it is connected in our imaginations with the idea of ſomething that is genteel and magnificent, and though in itſelf it ſhould be indifferent, it ſeems, on account of this relation, to have ſomething about it that is genteel and magnificent too. As ſoon as they drop it, it loſes all the grace, which it had appeared to poſſeſs before, and being now uſed only by the inferior ranks of people, ſeems to have ſomething of their meanneſs and awkwardneſs.

Dreſs and furniture are allowed by all the world to be entirely under the dominion of cuſtom and faſhion. The influence of thoſe principles, however, is by no means confined to ſo narrow a ſphere, but extends itſelf to whatever is in any reſpect the object of taſte, to muſic, to poetry, to architecture. The modes of dreſs and furniture are continually changing, and that faſhion

faſhion appearing ridiculous to-day which was admired five years ago, we are experimentally convinced that it owed its vogue chiefly or entirely to cuſtom and faſhion. Clothes and furniture are not made of very durable materials. A well-fancied coat is done in a twelve-month, and cannot continue longer to propagate, as the faſhion, that form according to which it was made. The modes of furniture change leſs rapidly than thoſe of dreſs; becauſe furniture is commonly more durable. In five or ſix years, however, it generally undergoes an entire revolution, and every man in his own time ſees the faſhion in this reſpect change many different ways. The productions of the other arts are much more laſting, and, when happily imagined, may continue to propagate the faſhion of their make for a much longer time. A well-contrived building may endure many centuries: a beautiful air may be delivered down by a ſort of tradition, through many ſucceſſive generations: a well-written poem may laſt

as long as the world; and all of them continue for ages together, to give the vogue to that particular ſtyle, to that particular taſte or manner, according to which each of them was compoſed. Few men have an opportunity of ſeeing in their own times the faſhion in any of theſe arts change very conſiderably. Few men have ſo much experience and acquaintance with the different modes which have obtained in remote ages and nations, as to be thoroughly reconciled to them, or to judge with impartiality between them, and what takes place in their own age and country. Few men therefore are willing to allow, that cuſtom or faſhion have much influence upon their judgments concerning what is beautiful, or otherwiſe, in the productions of any of thoſe arts; but imagine, that all the rules, which they think ought to be obſerved in each of them, are founded upon reaſon and nature, not upon habit or prejudice. A very little attention, however, may convince them of the contrary, and ſatisfy them, that the influence of

of cuſtom and faſhion over dreſs and furniture, is not more abſolute than over architecture, poetry, and muſic.

Can any reaſon, for example, be aſſigned why the Doric capital ſhould be appropriated to a pillar, whoſe height is equal to eight diameters; the Ionic volute to one of nine; and the Corinthian foliage to one of ten? The propriety of each of thoſe appropriations can be founded upon nothing but habit and cuſtom. The eye having been uſed to ſee a particular proportion connected with a particular ornament, would be offended if they were not joined together. Each of the five orders has its peculiar ornaments, which cannot be changed for any other, without giving offence to all thoſe who know any thing of the rules of architecture. According to ſome architects, indeed, ſuch is the exquiſite judgment with which the ancients have aſſigned to each order its proper ornaments, that no others can be found which are equally ſuitable. It ſeems,

however, a little difficult to be conceived that theſe forms, though, no doubt, extremely agreeable, ſhould be the only forms which can ſuit thoſe proportions, or that there ſhould not be five hundred others, which, antecedent to eſtabliſhed cuſtom, would have fitted them equally well. When cuſtom, however, has eſtabliſhed particular rules of building, provided they are not abſolutely unreaſonable, it is abſurd to think of altering them for others which are only equally good, or even for others which, in point of elegance and beauty, have naturally ſome little advantage over them. A man would be ridiculous who ſhould appear in public with a ſuit of clothes quite different from thoſe which are commonly worn, though the new dreſs ſhould in itſelf be ever ſo graceful or convenient. And there ſeems to be an abſurdity of the ſame kind in ornamenting a houſe after a quite different manner from that which cuſtom and faſhion have preſcribed; though the new ornaments ſhould in themſelves be ſomewhat ſuperior to the common ones.

According

According to the ancient rhetoricians, a certain meaſure or verſe was by nature appropriated to each particular ſpecies of writing, as being naturally expreſſive of that character, ſentiment, or paſſion, which ought to predominate in it. One verſe, they ſaid, was fit for grave, and another for gay works, which could not, they thought, be interchanged without the greateſt impropriety. The experience of modern times, however, ſeems to contradict this principle, though in itſelf it would appear to be extremely probable. What is the burleſque verſe in Engliſh, is the heroic verſe in French. The tragedies of Racine and the Henriad of Voltaire, are nearly in the ſame verſe with,

Let me have your advice in a weighty affair.

The burleſque verſe in French, on the contrary, is pretty much the ſame with the heroic verſe of ten ſyllables in Engliſh. Cuſtom has made the one nation aſſociate the ideas of gravity, ſublimity, and ſerioufneſs, to that meaſure which the other has connected

connected with whatever is gay, flippant, and ludicrous. Nothing would appear more abſurd in Engliſh, than a tragedy written in the Alexandrine verſes of the French; or in French, than a work of the ſame kind in verſes of ten ſyllables.

An eminent artiſt will bring about a conſiderable change in the eſtabliſhed modes of each of thoſe arts, and introduce a new faſhion of writing, muſic, or architecture. As the dreſs of an agreeable man of high rank recommends itſelf, and how peculiar and fantaſtical ſoever, comes ſoon to be admired and imitated; ſo the excellencies of an eminent maſter recommend his peculiarities, and his manner becomes the faſhionable ſtyle in the art which he practiſes. The taſte of the Italians in muſic and architecture, has, within theſe fifty years, undergone a conſiderable change, from imitating the peculiarities of ſome eminent maſters in each of thoſe arts. Seneca is accuſed by Quintilian of having corrupted the taſte of the Romans, and of having introduced a frivolous

frivolous prettineſs in the room of majeſtic reaſon and maſculine eloquence. Salluſt and Tacitus have by others been charged with the ſame accuſation, though in a different manner. They gave reputation, it is pretended, to a ſtyle, which though in the higheſt degree conciſe, elegant, expreſſive, and even poetical, wanted, however, eaſe, ſimplicity, and nature, and was evidently the production of the moſt laboured and ſtudied affectation. How many great qualities muſt that writer poſſeſs, who can thus render his very faults agreeable? After the praiſe of refining the taſte of a nation, the higheſt eulogy, perhaps, which can be beſtowed upon any author, is to ſay, that he corrupted it. In our own language, Mr. Pope and Dr. Swift have each of them introduced a manner different from what was practiſed before, into all works that are written in rhyme, the one in long verſes, the other in ſhort. The quaintneſs of Butler has given place to the plainneſs of Swift. The rambling freedom of Dryden, and the correct, but often tedious and proſaic languor of Addiſon, are

no

no longer the objects of imitation, but all long verſes are now written after the manner of the nervous preciſion of Mr. Pope.

Neither is it only over the productions of the arts, that cuſtom and faſhion exert their dominion. They influence our judgments, in the ſame manner, with regard to the beauty of natural objects. What various and oppoſite forms are deemed beautiful in different ſpecies of things? The proportions which are admired in one animal, are altogether different from thoſe which are eſteemed in another. Every claſs of things has its own peculiar conformation, which is approved of, and has a beauty of its own, diſtinct from that of every other ſpecies. It is upon this account that a learned Jeſuit, father Buffier, has determined that the beauty of every object conſiſts in that form and colour, which is moſt uſual among things of that particular ſort to which it belongs. Thus, in the human form, the beauty of each feature lies in a certain middle, equally removed from a variety of other forms that are

are ugly. A beautiful noſe, for example, is one that is neither very long, nor very ſhort, neither very ſtraight, nor very crooked, but a ſort of middle among all theſe extremes, and leſs different from any one of them, than all of them are from one another. It is the form which Nature ſeems to have aimed at in them all, which, however, ſhe deviates from in a great variety of ways, and very ſeldom hits exactly; but to which all thoſe deviations ſtill bear a very ſtrong reſemblance. When a number of drawings are made after one pattern, though they may all miſs it in ſome reſpects, yet they will all reſemble it more than they reſemble one another; the general character of the pattern will run through them all; the moſt ſingular and odd will be thoſe which are moſt wide of it; and though very few will copy it exactly, yet the moſt accurate delineations will bear a greater reſemblance to the moſt careleſs, than the careleſs ones will bear to one another. In the ſame manner, in each ſpecies of creatures, what is moſt beautiful bears the ſtrongeſt characters of the

the general fabric of the ſpecies, and has the ſtrongeſt reſemblance to the greater part of the individuals with which it is claſſed. Monſters, on the contrary, or what is perfectly deformed, are always moſt ſingular and odd, and have the leaſt reſemblance to the generality of that ſpecies to which they belong. And thus the beauty of each ſpecies, though in one ſenſe the rareſt of all things, becauſe few individuals hit this middle form exactly, yet in another, is the moſt common, becauſe all the deviations from it reſemble it more than they reſemble one another. The moſt cuſtomary form, therefore, is in each ſpecies of things, according to him, the moſt beautiful. And hence it is that a certain practice and experience in contemplating each ſpecies of objects is requiſite, before we can judge of its beauty, or know wherein the middle and moſt uſual form conſiſts. The niceſt judgment concerning the beauty of the human ſpecies, will not help us to judge of that of flowers, or horſes, or any other ſpecies of things. It is for the ſame reaſon that in different climates,

climates, and where different cuſtoms and ways of living take place, as the generality of any ſpecies receives a different conformation from thoſe circumſtances, ſo different ideas of its beauty prevail. The beauty of a Mooriſh is not exactly the ſame with that of an Engliſh horſe. What different ideas are formed in different nations concerning the beauty of the human ſhape and countenance? A fair complexion is a ſhocking deformity upon the coaſt of Guinea. Thick lips and a flat noſe are a beauty. In ſome nations long ears that hang down upon the ſhoulders are the objects of univerſal admiration. In China if a lady's foot is ſo large as to be fit to walk upon, ſhe is regarded as a monſter of uglineſs. Some of the ſavage nations in North-America tie four boards round the heads of their children, and thus ſqueeze them, while the bones are tender and griſtly, into a form that is almoſt perfectly ſquare. Europeans are aſtoniſhed at the abſurd barbarity of this practice, to which ſome miſſionaries have imputed the ſingular ſtupidity of thoſe nations among whom it

prevails. But when they condemn thoſe ſavages, they do not reflect that the ladies in Europe had, till within theſe very few years, been endeavouring, for near a century paſt, to ſqueeze the beautiful roundneſs of their natural ſhape into a ſquare form of the ſame kind. And that, notwithſtanding the many diſtortions and diſeaſes which this practice was known to occaſion, cuſtom had rendered it agreeable among ſome of the moſt civilized nations which, perhaps, the world ever beheld.

Such is the ſyſtem of this learned and ingenious Father, concerning the nature of beauty; of which the whole charm, according to him, would thus ſeem to ariſe from its falling in with the habits which cuſtom had impreſſed upon the imagination, with regard to things of each particular kind. I cannot, however, be induced to believe that our ſenſe even of external beauty is founded altogether on cuſtom. The utility of any form, its fitneſs for the uſeful purpoſes for which it was intended, evidently recommends it, and renders it agreeable

agreeable to us, independent of cuſtom. Certain colours are more agreeable than others, and give more delight to the eye the firſt time it ever beholds them. A ſmooth ſurface is more agreeable than a rough one. Variety is more pleaſing than a tedious undiverſified uniformity. Connected variety, in which each new appearance ſeems to be introduced by what went before it, and in which all the adjoining parts ſeem to have ſome natural relation to one another, is more agreeable than a disjointed and diſorderly aſſemblage of unconnected objects. But though I cannot admit that cuſtom is the ſole principle of beauty, yet I can ſo far allow the truth of this ingenious ſyſtem as to grant, that there is ſcarce any one external form ſo beautiful as to pleaſe, if quite contrary to cuſtom, and unlike whatever we have been uſed to in that particular ſpecies of things: or ſo deformed as not to be agreeable, if cuſtom uniformly ſupports it, and habituates us to ſee it in every ſingle individual of the kind.

CHAP. II.

Of the Influence of Cuſtom and Faſhion upon Moral Sentiments.

SINCE our ſentiments concerning beauty of every kind, are ſo much influenced by cuſtom and faſhion, it cannot be expected, that thoſe, concerning the beauty of conduct, ſhould be entirely exempted from the dominion of thoſe principles. Their influence here, however, ſeems to be much leſs than it is every where elſe. There is, perhaps, no form of external objects, how abſurd and fantaſtical ſoever, to which cuſtom will not reconcile us, or which faſhion will not render even agreeable. But the characters and conduct of a Nero, or a Claudius, are what no cuſtom will ever reconcile us to, what no faſhion will ever render agreeable; but the one will always be the object

ject of dread and hatred; the other of ſcorn and deriſion. The principles of the imagination, upon which our ſenſe of beauty depends, are of a very nice and delicate nature, and may eaſily be altered by habit and education: but the ſentiments of moral approbation and diſapprobation, are founded on the ſtrongeſt and moſt vigorous paſſions of human nature; and though they may be ſomewhat warpt, cannot be entirely perverted.

But though the influence of cuſtom and faſhion upon moral ſentiments, is not altogether ſo great, it is however perfectly ſimilar to what it is every where elſe. When cuſtom and faſhion coincide with the natural principles of right and wrong, they heighten the delicacy of our ſentiments, and increaſe our abhorrence for every thing which approaches to evil. Thoſe who have been educated in what is really good company, not in what is commonly called ſuch, who have been accuſtomed to ſee nothing in the perſons whom they eſteemed and lived with, but juſtice,

modeſty, humanity, and good order; are more ſhocked with whatever ſeems to be inconſiſtent with the rules which thoſe virtues preſcribe. Thoſe, on the contrary, who have had the misfortune to be brought up amidſt violence, licentiouſneſs, falſehood, and injuſtice; loſe, though not all ſenſe of the impropriety of ſuch conduct, yet all ſenſe of its dreadful enormity, or of the vengeance and puniſhment due to it. They have been familiarized with it from their infancy, cuſtom has rendered it habitual to them, and they are very apt to regard it as, what is called, the way of the world, ſomething which either may, or muſt be practiſed, to hinder us from being the dupes of our own integrity.

Faſhion too will ſometimes give reputation to a certain degree of diſorder, and, on the contrary, diſcountenance qualities which deſerve eſteem. In the reign of Charles II. a degree of licentiouſneſs was deemed the characteriſtic of a liberal education. It was connected, according to the notions of thoſe times, with generoſity, ſincerity,

ſincerity, magnanimity, loyalty, and proved that the perſon who acted in this manner, was a gentleman, and not a puritan. Severity of manners, and regularity of conduct, on the other hand, were altogether unfaſhionable, and were connected, in the imagination of that age, with cant, cunning, hypocriſy, and low manners. To ſuperficial minds, the vices of the great ſeem at all times agreeable. They connect them, not only with the ſplendour of fortune, but with many ſuperior virtues, which they aſcribe to their ſuperiors; with the ſpirit of freedom and independency, with frankneſs, generoſity, humanity, and politeneſs. The virtues of the inferior ranks of people, on the contrary, their parſimonious frugality, their painful induſtry, and rigid adherence to rules, ſeem to them mean and diſagreeable. They connect them, both with the meanneſs of the ſtation to which thoſe qualities commonly belong, and with many great vices, which, they ſuppoſe, uſually accompany them; ſuch as an abject, cowardly, ill-natured, lying, pilfering diſpoſition.

The objects with which men in the different profeſſions and ſtates of life are converſant, being very different, and habituating them to very different paſſions, naturally form in them very different characters and manners. We expect in each rank and profeſſion, a degree of thoſe manners, which, experience has taught us, belong to it. But as in each ſpecies of things, we are particularly pleaſed with the middle conformation, which, in every part and feature, agrees moſt exactly with the general ſtandard which nature ſeems to have eſtabliſhed for things of that kind; ſo in each rank, or, if I may ſay ſo, in each ſpecies of men, we are particularly pleaſed, if they have neither too much, nor too little of the character which uſually accompanies their particular condition and ſituation. A man, we ſay, ſhould look like his trade and profeſſion; yet the pedantry of every profeſſion is diſagreeable. The different periods of life have, for the ſame reaſon, different manners aſſigned to them. We expect in old age, that gravity and ſedateneſs which its infirmities, its long

long experience, and its worn-out ſenſibility ſeem to render both natural and reſpectable; and we lay our account to find in youth that ſenſibility, that gaiety and ſprightly vivacity which experience teaches us to expect from the lively impreſſions that all intereſting objects are apt to make upon the tender and unpractiſed ſenſes of that early period of life. Each of thoſe two ages, however, may eaſily have too much of theſe peculiarities which belong to it. The flirting levity of youth, and the immovable inſenſibility of old age, are equally diſagreeable. The young, according to the common ſaying, are moſt agreeable when in their behaviour there is ſomething of the manners of the old, and the old, when they retain ſomething of the gaiety of the young. Either of them, however, may eaſily have too much of the manners of the other. The extreme coldneſs, and dull formality, which are pardoned in old age, make youth ridiculous. The levity, the careleſſneſs, and the vanity, which are in-

dulged in youth, render old age contemptible.

The peculiar character and manners which we are led by cuſtom to appropriate to each rank and profeſſion, have ſometimes perhaps a propriety independent of cuſtom; and are what we ſhould approve of for their own ſakes, if we took into conſideration all the different circumſtances which naturally affect thoſe in each different ſtate of life. The propriety of a perſon's behaviour, depends not upon its ſuitableneſs to any one circumſtance of his ſituation, but to all the circumſtances, which, when we bring his caſe home to ourſelves, we feel, ſhould naturally call upon his attention. If he appears to be ſo much occupied by any one of them, as entirely to neglect the reſt, we diſapprove of his conduct, as ſomething which we cannot entirely go along with, becauſe not properly adjuſted to all the circumſtances of his ſituation: Yet, perhaps, the emotion he expreſſes for

for the object which principally intereſts him, does not exceed what we ſhould entirely ſympathize with, and approve of, in one whoſe attention was not required by any other thing. A parent in private life might, upon the loſs of an only ſon, expreſs without blame a degree of grief and tenderneſs, which would be unpardonable in a general at the head of an army, when glory, and the public ſafety, demanded ſo great a part of his attention. As different objects ought, upon common occaſions, to occupy the attention of men of different profeſſions, ſo different paſſions ought naturally to become habitual to them; and when we bring home to ourſelves their ſituation in this particular reſpect, we muſt be ſenſible, that every occurrence ſhould naturally affect them more or leſs, according as the emotion which it excites, coincides or diſagrees with the fixt habit and temper of their minds. We cannot expect the ſame ſenſibility to the gay pleaſures and amuſements of life in a clergyman, which we lay our account with

in

men of this profeſſion. It requires ſo great an effort to conquer the fear of death, when we ſurvey it with ſteadineſs and attention, that thoſe who are conſtantly expoſed to it, find it eaſier to turn away their thoughts from it altogether, to wrap themſelves up in careleſs ſecurity and indifference, and to plunge themſelves, for this purpoſe, into every ſort of amuſement and diſſipation. A camp is not the element of a thoughtful or a melancholy man: perſons of that caſt, indeed, are often abundantly determined, and are capable, by a great effort, of going on with inflexible reſolution to the moſt unavoidable death. But to be expoſed to continual, though leſs imminent danger, to be obliged to exert, for a long time, a degree of this effort, exhauſts and depreſſes the mind, and renders it incapable of all happineſs and enjoyment. The gay and careleſs, who have occaſion to make no effort at all, who fairly reſolve never to look before them, but to loſe in continual pleaſures and amuſements all anxiety about their ſituation, more eaſily ſupport ſuch circumſtances.

ſtances. Whenever, by any peculiar circumſtances, an officer has no reaſon to lay his account with being expoſed to any uncommon danger, he is very apt to loſe the gaiety and diſſipated thoughtleſſneſs of his character. The captain of a city guard is commonly as ſober, careful, and penurious an animal as the reſt of his fellow-citizens. A long peace is, for the ſame reaſon, very apt to diminiſh the difference between the civil and the military character. The ordinary ſituation, however, of men of this profeſſion, renders gaiety, and a degree of diſſipation, ſo much their uſual character; and cuſtom has, in our imagination, ſo ſtrongly connected this character with this ſtate of life, that we are very apt to deſpiſe any man, whoſe peculiar humour or ſituation, renders him incapable of acquiring it. We laugh at the grave and careful faces of a city guard, which ſo little reſemble thoſe of their profeſſion. They themſelves ſeem often to be aſhamed of the regularity of their own manners, and, not to be out of the faſhion of their trade, are fond of affecting that levity, which is by

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no means natural to them. Whatever is the deportment which we have been accuſtomed to ſee in a reſpectable order of men, it comes to be ſo aſſociated in our imagination with that order, that whenever we ſee the one, we lay our account that we are to meet with the other, and when diſappointed, miſs ſomething which we expected to find. We are embarraſſed, and put to a ſtand, and know not how to addreſs ourſelves to a character, which plainly affects to be of a different ſpecies from thoſe with which we ſhould have been diſpoſed to claſs it.

The different ſituations of different ages and countries are apt, in the ſame manner, to give different characters to the generality of thoſe who live in them, and their ſentiments concerning the particular degree of each quality, that is either blamable or praiſe-worthy, vary, according to that degree which is uſual in their own country, and in their own times. That degree of politeneſs, which would be highly eſteemed, perhaps, would be thought

thought effeminate adulation, in Ruſſia, would be regarded as rudeneſs and barbariſm at the court of France. That degree of order and frugality, which, in a Poliſh nobleman, would be conſidered as exceſſive parſimony, would be regarded as extravagance in a citizen of Amſterdam. Every age and country look upon that degree of each quality, which is commonly to be met with in thoſe who are eſteemed among themſelves, as the golden mean of that particular talent or virtue. And as this varies, according as their different circumſtances render different qualities more or leſs habitual to them, their ſentiments concerning the exact propriety of character and behaviour vary accordingly.

Among civilized nations, the virtues which are founded upon humanity, are more cultivated than thoſe which are founded upon ſelf-denial and the command of the paſſions. Among rude and barbarous nations, it is quite otherwiſe, the virtues of ſelf-denial are more cultivated than thoſe of humanity. The general ſecurity

and happineſs which prevail in ages of civility and politeneſs, afford little exerciſe to the contempt of danger, to patience in enduring labour, hunger, and pain. Poverty may eaſily be avoided, and the contempt of it therefore almoſt ceaſes to be a virtue. The abſtinence from pleaſure becomes leſs neceſſary, and the mind is more at liberty to unbend itſelf, and to indulge its natural inclinations in all thoſe particular reſpects.

Among ſavages and barbarians it is quite otherwiſe. Every ſavage undergoes a ſort of Spartan diſcipline, and by the neceſſity of his ſituation is inured to every ſort of hardſhip. He is in continual danger: he is often expoſed to the greateſt extremities of hunger, and frequently dies of pure want. His circumſtances not only habituate him to every ſort of diſtreſs, but teach him to give way to none of the paſſions which that diſtreſs is apt to excite. He can expect from his countrymen no ſympathy or indulgence for ſuch weakneſs. Before we can feel much for others, we muſt

muſt in ſome meaſure be at eaſe ourſelves. If our own miſery pinches us very ſeverely, we have no leiſure to attend to that of our neighbour: and all ſavages are too much occupied with their own wants and neceſſities, to give much attention to thoſe of another perſon. A ſavage, therefore, whatever be the nature of his diſtreſs, expects no ſympathy from thoſe about him, and diſdains, upon that account, to expoſe himſelf, by allowing the leaſt weakneſs to eſcape him. His paſſions, how furious and violent ſoever, are never permitted to diſturb the ſerenity of his countenance or the compoſure of his conduct and behaviour. The ſavages in North America, we are told, aſſume upon all occaſions the greateſt indifference, and would think themſelves degraded if they ſhould ever appear in any reſpect to be overcome, either by love, or grief, or reſentment. Their magnanimity and ſelf-command, in this reſpect, are almoſt beyond the conception of Europeans. In a country in which all men are upon a level, with regard to rank and fortune, it might be ex-

pected that the mutual inclinations of the two parties ſhould be the only thing conſidered in marriages, and ſhould be indulged without any ſort of control. This, however, is the country in which all marriages, without exception, are made up by the parents, and in which a young man would think himſelf diſgraced for ever, if he ſhewed the leaſt preference of one woman above another, or did not expreſs the moſt complete indifference, both about the time when, and the perſon to whom, he was to be married. The weakneſs of love, which is ſo much indulged in ages of humanity and politeneſs, is regarded among ſavages as the moſt unpardonable effeminacy. Even after the marriage, the two parties ſeem to be aſhamed of a connexion which is founded upon ſo ſordid a neceſſity. They do not live together. They ſee one another by ſtealth only. They both continue to dwell in the houſes of their reſpective fathers, and the open cohabitation of the two ſexes, which is permitted without blame in all other countries, is here conſidered as the moſt indecent

indecent and unmanly ſenſuality. Nor is it only over this agreeable paſſion that they exert this abſolute ſelf-command. They often bear, in the ſight of all their countrymen, with injuries, reproach, and the groſſeſt inſults, with the appearance of the greateſt inſenſibility, and without expreſſing the ſmalleſt reſentment. When a ſavage is made priſoner of war, and receives, as is uſual, the ſentence of death from his conquerors, he hears it without expreſſing any emotion, and afterwards ſubmits to the moſt dreadful torments, without ever bemoaning himſelf, or diſcovering any other paſſion but contempt of his enemies. While he is hung by the ſhoulders over a ſlow fire, he derides his tormentors, and tells them with how much more ingenuity he himſelf had tormented ſuch of their countrymen as had fallen into his hands. After he has been ſcorched and burnt, and lacerated in all the moſt tender and ſenſible parts of his body for ſeveral hours together, he is often allowed, in order to prolong his miſery, a ſhort reſpite, and is taken down from the ſtake: he employs this interval

in talking upon all indifferent ſubjects, inquires after the news of the country, and ſeems indifferent about nothing but his own ſituation. The ſpectators expreſs the ſame inſenſibility; the ſight of ſo horrible an object ſeems to make no impreſſion upon them; they ſcarce look at the priſoner, except when they lend a hand to torment him. At other times they ſmoke tobacco, and amuſe themſelves with any common object, as if no ſuch matter was going on. Every ſavage is ſaid to prepare himſelf from his earlieſt youth for this dreadful end. He compoſes, for this purpoſe, what they call the ſong of death, a ſong which he is to ſing when he has fallen into the hands of his enemies, and is expiring under the tortures which they inflict upon him. It conſiſts of inſults upon his tormentors, and expreſſes the higheſt contempt of death and pain. He ſings this ſong upon all extraordinary occaſions, when he goes out to war, when he meets his enemies in the field, or whenever he has a mind to ſhow that he has familiariſed his imagination to the moſt dreadful misfortunes, and that no human

human event can daunt his reſolution, or alter his purpoſe. The ſame contempt of death and torture prevails among all other ſavage nations. There is not a negro from the coaſt of Africa who does not, in this reſpect, poſſeſs a degree of magnanimity which the ſoul of his ſordid maſter is too often ſcarce capable of conceiving. Fortune never exerted more cruelly her empire over mankind, than when ſhe ſubjected thoſe nations of heroes to the refuſe of the jails of Europe, to wretches who poſſeſs the virtues neither of the countries which they come from, nor of thoſe which they go to, and whoſe levity, brutality, and baſeneſs, ſo juſtly expoſe them to the contempt of the vanquiſhed.

This heroic and unconquerable firmneſs, which the cuſtom and education of his country demand of every ſavage, is not required of thoſe who are brought up to live in civilized ſocieties. If theſe laſt complain when they are in pain, if they grieve when they are in diſtreſs, if they allow themſelves either to be overcome by love, or to be

diſcompoſed by anger, they are eaſily pardoned. Such weakneſſes are not apprehended to affect the eſſential parts of their character. As long as they do not allow themſelves to be tranſported to do any thing contrary to juſtice or humanity, they loſe but little reputation, though the ſerenity of their countenance, or the compoſure of their diſcourſe and behaviour, ſhould be ſomewhat ruffled and diſturbed. A humane and poliſhed people, who have more ſenſibility to the paſſions of others, can more readily enter into an animated and paſſionate behaviour, and can more eaſily pardon ſome little exceſs. The perſon principally concerned is ſenſible of this; and being aſſured of the equity of his judges, indulges himſelf in ſtronger expreſſions or paſſion, and is leſs afraid of expoſing himſelf to their contempt by the violence of his emotions. We can venture to expreſs more emotion in the preſence of a friend than in that of a ſtranger, becauſe we expect more indulgence from the one than from the other. And in the ſame manner the rules of decorum among civilized nations,

tions, admit of a more animated behaviour, than is approved of among barbarians. The firſt converſe together with the openneſs of friends; the ſecond, with the reſerve of ſtrangers. The emotion and vivacity with which the French and the Italians, the two moſt poliſhed nations upon the continent, expreſs themſelves on occaſions that are at all intereſting, ſurpriſe at firſt thoſe ſtrangers who happen to be travelling among them, and who, having been educated among a people of duller ſenſibility, cannot enter into this paſſionate behaviour, of which they have never ſeen any example in their own country. A young French nobleman will weep in the preſence of the whole court upon being refuſed a regiment. An Italian, ſays the abbot Dû Bos, expreſſes more emotion on being condemned in a fine of twenty ſhillings, than an Engliſhman on receiving the ſentence of death. Cicero, in the times of the higheſt Roman politeneſs, could, without degrading himſelf, weep with all the bitterneſs of ſorrow in the ſight of the whole ſenate and the whole people; as it is evident he muſt

have done in the end of almoſt every oration. The orators of the earlier and ruder ages of Rome could not probably, conſiſtent with the manners of the times, have expreſſed themſelves with ſo much emotion. It would have been regarded, I ſuppoſe, as a violation of nature and propriety in the Scipios, in the Leliuſes, and in the elder Cato, to have expoſed ſo much tenderneſs to the view of the public. Thoſe ancient warriors could expreſs themſelves with order, gravity, and good judgment; but are ſaid to have been ſtrangers to that ſublime and paſſionate eloquence which was firſt introduced into Rome, not many years before the birth of Cicero, by the two Gracchi, by Craſſus, and by Sulpitius. This animated eloquence, which has been long practiſed, with or without ſucceſs, both in France and Italy, is but juſt beginning to be introduced into England. So wide is the difference between the degrees of ſelf-command which are required in civilized and in barbarous nations, and by ſuch different ſtandards do they judge of propriety of behaviour.

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This difference gives occaſion to many others that are not leſs eſſential. A poliſhed people being accuſtomed to give way, in ſome meaſure, to the movements of nature, become frank, open, and ſincere. Barbarians, on the contrary, being obliged to ſmother and conceal the appearance of every paſſion, neceſſarily acquire the habits of falſehood and diſſimulation. It is obſerved by all thoſe who have been converſant with ſavage nations, whether in Aſia, Africa, or America, that they are all equally impenetrable, and that, when they have a mind to conceal the truth, no examination is capable of drawing it from them. They cannot be trepanned by the moſt artful queſtions. The torture itſelf is incapable of making them confeſs any thing which they have no mind to tell. The paſſions of a ſavage too, though they never expreſs themſelves by any outward emotion, but lie concealed in the breaſt of the ſufferer, are, notwithſtanding, all mounted to the higheſt pitch of fury. Though he ſeldom ſhews any ſymptoms of anger, yet his vengeance, when he comes to give way

way to it, is always ſanguinary and dreadful. The leaſt affront drives him to deſpair. His countenance and diſcourſe indeed are ſtill ſober and compoſed, and expreſs nothing but the moſt perfect tranquillity of mind: but his actions are often the moſt furious and violent. Among the North-Americans it is not uncommon for perſons of the tendereſt age and more fearful ſex to drown themſelves upon receiving only a ſlight reprimand from their mothers, and this too without expreſſing any paſſion, or ſaying any thing, except, *you ſhall no longer have a daughter*. In civilized nations the paſſions of men are not commonly ſo furious or ſo deſperate. They are often clamorous and noiſy, but are ſeldom very hurtful; and ſeem frequently to aim at no other ſatisfaction, but that of convincing the ſpectator, that they are in the right to be ſo much moved, and of procuring his ſympathy and approbation.

All theſe effects of cuſtom and faſhion, however, upon the moral ſentiments of mankind, are inconſiderable, in compariſon of

of thoſe which they give occaſion to in ſome other caſes; and it is not concerning the general ſtyle of character and behaviour, that thoſe principles produce the greateſt perverſion of judgment, but concerning the propriety or impropriety of particular uſages.

The different manners which cuſtom teaches us to approve of in the different profeſſions and ſtates of life, do not concern things of the greateſt importance. We expect truth and juſtice from an old man as well as from a young, from a clergyman as well as from an officer; and it is in matters of ſmall moment only that we look for the diſtinguiſhing marks of their reſpective characters. With regard to theſe too, there is often ſome unobſerved circumſtance which, if it was attended to, would ſhow us, that, independent of cuſtom, there was a propriety in the character which cuſtom had taught us to allot to each profeſſion. We cannot complain, therefore, in this caſe, that the perverſion of natural

ſentiment is very great. Though the manners of different nations require different degrees of the ſame quality, in the character which they think worthy of eſteem, yet the worſt that can be ſaid to happen even here, is, that the duties of one virtue are ſometimes extended ſo as to encroach a little upon the precincts of ſome other. The ruſtic hoſpitality that is in faſhion among the Poles encroaches, perhaps, a little upon œconomy and good order; and the frugality that is eſteemed in Holland, upon generoſity and good-fellowſhip. The hardineſs demanded of ſavages diminiſhes their humanity; and, perhaps, the delicate ſenſibility required in civilized nations ſometimes deſtroys the maſculine firmneſs of the character. In general, the ſtyle of manners which takes place in any nation, may commonly upon the whole be ſaid to be that which is moſt ſuitable to its ſituation. Hardineſs is the character moſt ſuitable to the circumſtances of a ſavage; ſenſibility to thoſe of one who lives in a very civilized ſociety. Even here, therefore,

therefore, we cannot complain that the moral ſentiments of men are very groſsly perverted.

It is not therefore in the general ſtyle of conduct or behaviour that cuſtom authoriſes the wideſt departure from what is the natural propriety of action. With regard to particular uſages, its influence is often much more deſtructive of good morals, and it is capable of eſtabliſhing, as lawful and blameleſs, particular actions, which ſhock the plaineſt principles of right and wrong.

Can there be greater barbarity, for example, than to hurt an infant? Its helpleſſneſs, its innocence, its amiableneſs, call forth the compaſſion, even of an enemy, and not to ſpare that tender age is regarded as the moſt furious effort of an enraged and cruel conqueror. What then ſhould we imagine muſt be the heart of a parent who could injure that weakneſs which even a furious enemy is afraid to violate? Yet the expoſition, that is, the murder of new-born infants, was a practice allowed

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of in almoſt all the ſtates of Greece, even among the polite and civilized Athenians; and whenever the circumſtances of the parent rendered it inconvenient to bring up the child, to abandon it to hunger, or to wild beaſts, was regarded without blame or cenſure. This practice had probably begun in times of the moſt ſavage barbarity. The imaginations of men had been firſt made familiar with it in that earlieſt period of ſociety, and the uniform continuance of the cuſtom had hindered them afterwards from perceiving its enormity. We find, at this day, that this practice prevails among all ſavage nations; and in that rudeſt and loweſt ſtate of ſociety it is undoubtedly more pardonable than in any other. The extreme indigence of a ſavage is often ſuch that he himſelf is frequently expoſed to the greateſt extremity of hunger, he often dies of pure want, and it is frequently impoſſible for him to ſupport both himſelf and his child. We cannot wonder, therefore, that in this caſe he ſhould abandon it. One who, in flying from an enemy, whom it was impoſſible to reſiſt, ſhould throw

throw down his infant, becauſe it retarded his flight, would ſurely be excuſable; ſince, by attempting to ſave it, he could only hope for the conſolation of dying with it. That in this ſtate of ſociety, therefore, a parent ſhould be allowed to judge whether he can bring up his child, ought not to ſurpriſe us ſo greatly. In the latter ages of Greece, however, the ſame thing was permitted from views of remote intereſt or conveniency, which could by no means excuſe it. Uninterrupted cuſtom had by this time ſo thoroughly authoriſed the practice, that not only the looſe maxims of the world tolerated this barbarous prerogative, but even the doctrine of philoſophers, which ought to have been more juſt and accurate, was led away by the eſtabliſhed cuſtom, and upon this, as upon many other occaſions, inſtead of cenſuring, ſupported the horrible abuſe, by far-fetched conſiderations of public utility. Ariſtotle talks of it as of what the magiſtrate ought upon many occaſions to encourage. The humane Plato is of the ſame opinion, and, with all that love of mankind which ſeems

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to animate all his writings, no where marks this practice with diſapprobation. When cuſtom can give ſanction to ſo dreadful a violation of humanity, we may well imagine that there is ſcarce any particular practice ſo groſs which it cannot authoriſe. Such a thing, we hear men every day ſaying, is commonly done, and they ſeem to think this a ſufficient apology for what, in itſelf, is the moſt unjuſt and unreaſonable conduct.

There is an obvious reaſon why cuſtom ſhould never pervert our ſentiments with regard to the general ſtyle and character of conduct and behaviour, in the ſame degree as with regard to the propriety or unlawfulneſs of particular uſages. There never can be any ſuch cuſtom. No ſociety could ſubſiſt a moment, in which the uſual ſtrain of men's conduct and behaviour was of a piece with the horrible practice I have juſt now mentioned.

THE

THEORY

OF

MORAL SENTIMENTS.

PART VI.

Of the CHARACTER of VIRTUE.

Conſiſting of Three Sections.

INTRODUCTION.

WHEN we conſider the character of any individual, we naturally view it under two different aſpects; firſt, as it may affect his own happineſs; and ſecondly, as it may affect that of other people.

SECT. I.

Of the Character of the Individual, ſo far as it affects his own Happineſs; or of Prudence.

THE preſervation and healthful ſtate of the body ſeem to be the objects which Nature firſt recommends to the care of every individual. The appetites of hunger and thirſt, the agreeable or diſagreeable ſenſations of pleaſure and pain, of heat and cold, &c. may be conſidered as leſſons delivered by the voice of Nature herſelf, directing him what he ought to chuſe, and what he ought to avoid, for this purpoſe. The firſt leſſons which he is taught by thoſe to whom his childhood is entruſted, tend, the greater part of them, to the *ſame* purpoſe. Their principal object is to teach him how to keep out of harm's way.

As he grows up, he ſoon learns that ſome care and foreſight are neceſſary for providing the means of gratifying thoſe natural

natural appetites, of procuring pleaſure and avoiding pain, of procuring the agreeable and avoiding the diſagreeable temperature of heat and cold. In the proper direction of this care and foreſight conſiſts the art of preſerving and increaſing what is called his external fortune.

Though it is in order to ſupply the neceſſities and conveniences of the body, that the advantages of external fortune are originally recommended to us, yet we cannot live long in the world without perceiving that the reſpect of our equals, our credit and rank in the ſociety we live in, depend very much upon the degree in which we poſſeſs, or are ſuppoſed to poſſeſs, thoſe advantages. The deſire of becoming the proper objects of this reſpect, of deſerving and obtaining this credit and rank among our equals, is, perhaps, the ſtrongeſt of all our deſires, and our anxiety to obtain the advantages of fortune is accordingly much more excited and irritated by this deſire, than by that of ſupplying all

the neceſſities and conveniences of the body, which are always very eaſily ſupplied.

Our rank and credit among our equals, too, depend very much upon, what, perhaps, a virtuous man would wiſh them to depend entirely, our character and conduct, or upon the confidence, eſteem, and goodwill, which theſe naturally excite in the people we live with.

The care of the health, of the fortune, of the rank and reputation of the individual, the objects upon which his comfort and happineſs in this life are ſuppoſed principally to depend, is conſidered as the proper buſineſs of that virtue which is commonly called Prudence.

We ſuffer more, it has already been obſerved, when we fall from a better to a worſe ſituation, than we ever enjoy when we riſe from a worſe to a better. Security, therefore, is the firſt and the principal object of prudence. It is averſe to expoſe our

our health, our fortune, our rank, or reputation, to any ſort of hazard. It is rather cautious than enterpriſing, and more anxious to preſerve the advantages which we already poſſeſs, than forward to prompt us to the acquiſition of ſtill greater advantages. The methods of improving our fortune, which it principally recommends to us, are thoſe which expoſe to no loſs or hazard; real knowledge and ſkill in our trade or profeſſion, aſſiduity and induſtry in the exerciſe of it, frugality, and even ſome degree of parſimony, in all our expences.

The prudent man always ſtudies ſeriouſly and earneſtly to underſtand whatever he profeſſes to underſtand, and not merely to perſuade other people that he underſtands it; and though his talents may not always be very brilliant, they are always perfectly genuine. He neither endeavours to impoſe upon you by the cunning devices of of an artful impoſtor, nor by the arrogant airs of an aſſuming pedant, nor by the confident aſſertions of a ſuperficial and im-

pudent pretender. He is not oſtentatious even of the abilities which he really poſſeſſes. His converſation is ſimple and modeſt, and he is averſe to all the quackiſh arts by which other people ſo frequently thruſt themſelves into public notice and reputation. For reputation in his profeſſion he is naturally diſpoſed to rely a good deal upon the ſolidity of his knowledge and abilities; and he does not always think of cultivating the favour of thoſe little clubs and cabals, who, in the ſuperior arts and ſciences, ſo often erect themſelves into the ſupreme judges of merit; and who make it their buſineſs to celebrate the talents and virtues of one another, and to decry whatever can come into competition with them. If he ever connects himſelf with any ſociety of this kind, it is merely in ſelf-defence, not with a view to impoſe upon the public, but to hinder the public from being impoſed upon, to his diſadvantage, by the clamours, the whiſpers, or the intrigues, either of that particular ſociety, or of ſome other of the ſame kind.

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The prudent man is always ſincere, and feels horror at the very thought of expoſing himſelf to the diſgrace which attends upon the detection of falſehood. But though always ſincere, he is not always frank and open; and though he never tells any thing but the truth, he does not always think himſelf bound, when not properly called upon, to tell the whole truth. As he is cautious in his actions, ſo he is reſerved in his ſpeech; and never raſhly or unneceſſarily obtrudes his opinion concerning either things or perſons.

The prudent man, though not always diſtinguiſhed by the moſt exquiſite ſenſibility, is always very capable of friendſhip. But his friendſhip is not that ardent and paſſionate, but too often tranſitory affection, which appears ſo delicious to the generoſity of youth and inexperience. It is a ſedate, but ſteady and faithful attachment to a few well-tried and well-choſen companions; in the choice of whom he is not guided by the giddy admiration of ſhining accompliſhments, but by the ſober

eſteem of modeſty, diſcretion, and good conduct. But though capable of friendſhip, he is not always much diſpoſed to general ſociality. He rarely frequents, and more rarely figures in thoſe convivial ſocieties which are diſtinguiſhed for the jollity and gaiety of their converſation. Their way of life might too often interfere with the regularity of his temperance, might interrupt the ſteadineſs of his induſtry, or break in upon the ſtrictneſs of his frugality.

But though his converſation may not always be very ſprightly or diverting, it is always perfectly inoffenſive. He hates the thought of being guilty of any petulance or rudeneſs. He never aſſumes impertinently over any body, and, upon all common occaſions, is willing to place himſelf rather below than above his equals. Both in his conduct and converſation, he is an exact obſerver of decency, and reſpects with an almoſt religious ſcrupuloſity, all the eſtabliſhed decorums and ceremonials of ſociety. And, in this reſpect, he ſets a much better example than has frequently been done by men

men of much more ſplendid talents and virtues; who, in all ages, from that of Socrates and Ariſtippus, down to that of Dr. Swift and Voltaire, and from that of Philip and Alexander the Great, down to that of the great Czar Peter of Moſcovy, have too often diſtinguiſhed themſelves by the moſt improper and even inſolent contempt of all the ordinary decorums of life and converſation, and who have thereby ſet the moſt pernicious example to thoſe who wiſh to reſemble them, and who too often content themſelves with imitating their follies, without even attempting to attain their perfections.

In the ſteadineſs of his induſtry and frugality, in his ſteadily ſacrificing the eaſe and enjoyment of the preſent moment for the probable expectation of the ſtill greater eaſe and enjoyment of a more diſtant but more laſting period of time, the prudent man is always both ſupported and rewarded by the entire approbation of the impartial ſpectator, and of the repreſentative of the impartial ſpectator, the man within the breaſt.

breaſt. The impartial ſpectator does not feel himſelf worn out by the preſent labour of thoſe whoſe conduct he ſurveys; nor does he feel himſelf ſolicited by the importunate calls of their preſent appetites. To him their preſent, and what is likely to be their future ſituation, are very nearly the ſame: he ſees them nearly at the ſame diſtance, and is affected by them very nearly in the ſame manner. He knows, however, that to the perſons principally concerned, they are very far from being the ſame, and that they naturally affect *them* in a very different manner. He cannot therefore but approve, and even applaud, that proper exertion of ſelf-command, which enables them to act as if their preſent and their future ſituation affected them nearly in the ſame manner in which they affect him.

The man who lives within his income, is naturally contented with his ſituation, which, by continual, though ſmall accumulations, is growing better and better every day. He is enabled gradually to relax, both in the rigour of his parſimony and in the ſeverity of his appli-

application; and he feels with double ſatiſfaction this gradual increaſe of eaſe and enjoyment, from having felt before the hardſhip which attended the want of them. He has no anxiety to change ſo comfortable a ſituation, and does not go in queſt of new enterpriſes and adventures, which might endanger, but could not well increaſe, the ſecure tranquillity which he actually enjoys. If he enters into any new projects or enterpriſes, they are likely to be well concerted and well prepared. He can never be hurried or drove into them by any neceſſity, but has always time and leiſure to deliberate ſoberly and coolly concerning what are likely to be their conſequences.

The prudent man is not willing to ſubject himſelf to any reſponſibility which his duty does not impoſe upon him. He is not a buſtler in buſineſs where he has no concern; is not a meddler in other people's affairs; is not a profeſſed counſellor or adviſer, who obtrudes his advice where nobody is aſking it. He confines himſelf, as much as his duty will permit, to his own affairs, and has no taſte for that fooliſh importance

portance which many people wiſh to derive from appearing to have ſome influence in the management of thoſe of other people. He is averſe to enter into any party diſputes, hates faction, and is not always very forward to liſten to the voice even of noble and great ambition. When diſtinctly called upon, he will not decline the ſervice of his country, but he will not cabal in order to force himſelf into it, and would be much better pleaſed that the public buſineſs were well managed by ſome other perſon, than that he himſelf ſhould have the trouble, and incur the reſponſibility, of managing it. In the bottom of his heart he would prefer the undiſturbed enjoyment of ſecure tranquillity, not only to all the vain ſplendour of ſucceſsful ambition, but to the real and ſolid glory of performing the greateſt and moſt magnanimous actions.

Prudence, in ſhort, when directed merely to the care of the health, of the fortune, and of the rank and reputation of the individual, though it is regarded as a moſt reſpectable, and even, in ſome degree, as an amiable and

agreeable quality, yet it never is conſidered as one, either of the moſt endearing, or of the moſt ennobling of the virtues. It commands a certain cold eſteem, but ſeems not entitled to any very ardent love or admiration.

Wiſe and judicious conduct, when directed to greater and nobler purpoſes than the care of the health, the fortune, the rank and reputation of the individual, is frequently and very properly called prudence. We talk of the prudence of the great general, of the great ſtateſman, of the great legiſlator. Prudence is, in all theſe caſes, combined with many greater and more ſplendid virtues, with valour, with extenſive and ſtrong benevolence, with a ſacred regard to the rules of juſtice, and all theſe ſupported by a proper degree of ſelf-command. This ſuperior prudence, when carried to the higheſt degree of perfection, neceſſarily ſuppoſes the art, the talent, and the habit or diſpoſition of acting with the moſt perfect propriety in every poſſible circumſtance and ſituation. It neceſſarily ſuppoſes

poſes the utmoſt perfection of all the intellectual and of all the moral virtues. It is the beſt head joined to the beſt heart. It is the moſt perfect wiſdom combined with the moſt perfect virtue. It conſtitutes very nearly the character of the Academical or Peripatetic ſage, as the inferior prudence does that of the Epicurean.

Mere imprudence, or the mere want of the capacity to take care of one's-ſelf, is, with the generous and humane, the object of compaſſion; with thoſe of leſs delicate ſentiments, of neglect, or, at worſt, of contempt, but never of hatred or indignation. When combined with other vices, however, it aggravates in the higheſt degree the infamy and diſgrace which would otherwiſe attend them. The artful knave, whoſe dexterity and addreſs exempt him, though not from ſtrong ſuſpicions, yet from puniſhment or diſtinct detection, is too often received in the world with an indulgence which he by no means deſerves. The awkward and fooliſh one, who, for want of this dexterity and addreſs, is convicted

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and brought to puniſhment, is the object of univerſal hatred, contempt, and deriſion. In countries where great crimes frequently paſs unpuniſhed, the moſt atrocious actions become almoſt familiar, and ceaſe to impreſs the people with that horror which is univerſally felt in countries where an exact adminiſtration of juſtice takes place. The injuſtice is the ſame in both countries; but the imprudence is often very different. In the latter, great crimes are evidently great follies. In the former, they are not always conſidered as ſuch. In Italy, during the greater part of the ſixteenth century, aſſaſſinations, murders, and even murders under truſt, ſeem to have been almoſt familiar among the ſuperior ranks of people. Cæſar Borgia invited four of the little princes in his neighbourhood, who all poſſeſſed little ſovereignties, and commanded little armies of their own, to a friendly conference at Senigaglia, where, as ſoon as they arrived, he put them all to death. This infamous action, though certainly not approved of even in that age of crimes, ſeems to have contributed

buted very little to the diſcredit, and not in the leaſt to the ruin of the perpetrator. That ruin happened a few years after from cauſes altogether diſconnected with this crime. Machiavel, not indeed a man of the niceſt morality even for his own times, was reſident, as miniſter from the republic of Florence, at the court of Cæſar Borgia when this crime was committed. He gives a very particular account of it, and in that pure, elegant, and ſimple language which diſtinguiſhes all his writings. He talks of it very coolly; is pleaſed with the addreſs with which Cæſar Borgia conducted it; has much contempt for the dupery and weakneſs of the ſufferers; but no compaſſion for their miſerable and untimely death, and no ſort of indignation at the cruelty and falſehood of their murderer. The violence and injuſtice of great conquerors are often regarded with fooliſh wonder and admiration; thoſe of petty thieves, robbers, and murderers, with contempt, hatred, and even horror upon all occaſions. The former, though they are a hundred times more miſchievous and deſtruc-

deſtructive, yet when ſucceſsful, they often paſs for deeds of the moſt heroic magnanimity. The latter are always viewed with hatred and averſion, as the follies, as well as the crimes, of the loweſt and moſt worthleſs of mankind. The injuſtice of the former is certainly, at leaſt, as great as that of the latter; but the folly and imprudence are not near ſo great. A wicked and worthleſs man of parts often goes through the world with much more credit than he deſerves. A wicked and worthleſs fool appears always, of all mortals, the moſt hateful, as well as the moſt contemptible. As prudence combined with other virtues, conſtitutes the nobleſt; ſo imprudence combined with other vices, conſtitutes the vileſt of all characters.

SECTION II.

Of the Character of the Individual, ſo far as it can affect the Happineſs of other People.

INTRODUCTION.

THE character of every individual, ſo far as it can affect the happineſs of other people, muſt do ſo by its diſpoſition either to hurt or to benefit them.

Proper reſentment for injuſtice attempted, or actually committed, is the only motive which, in the eyes of the impartial ſpectator, can juſtify our hurting or diſturbing in any reſpect the happineſs of our neighbour. To do ſo from any other motive is itſelf a violation of the laws of juſtice, which force ought to be employed either to reſtrain or to puniſh. The wiſdom

dom of every ſtate or commonwealth endeavours, as well as it can, to employ the force of the ſociety to reſtrain thoſe who are ſubject to its authority, from hurting or diſturbing the happineſs of one another. The rules which it eſtabliſhes for this purpoſe, conſtitute the civil and criminal law of each particular ſtate or country. The principles upon which thoſe rules either are, or ought to be founded, are the ſubject of a particular ſcience, of all ſciences by far the moſt important, but hitherto, perhaps, the leaſt cultivated, that of natural juriſprudence; concerning which it belongs not to our preſent ſubject to enter into any detail. A ſacred and religious regard not to hurt or diſturb in any reſpect the happineſs of our neighbour, even in thoſe caſes where no law can properly protect him, conſtitutes the character of the perfectly innocent and juſt man; a character which, when carried to a certain delicacy of attention, is always highly reſpectable and even venerable for its own ſake, and can ſcarce ever fail to be accompanied with many other virtues, with great

feeling for other people, with great humanity and great benevolence. It is a character ſufficiently underſtood, and requires no further explanation. In the preſent ſection I ſhall only endeavour to explain the foundation of that order which nature ſeems to have traced out for the diſtribution of our good offices, or for the direction and employment of our very limited powers of beneficence: firſt, towards individuals; and ſecondly, towards ſocieties.

The ſame unerring wiſdom, it will be found, which regulates every other part of her conduct, directs, in this reſpect too, the order of her recommendations; which are always ſtronger or weaker in proportion as our beneficence is more or leſs neceſſary, or can be more or leſs uſeful.

CHAP. I.

Of the Order in which Individuals are recommended by Nature to our care and attention.

EVERY man, as the Stoics uſed to ſay, is firſt and principally recommended to his own care; and every man is certainly, in every reſpect, fitter and abler to take care of himſelf than of any other perſon. Every man feels his own pleaſures and his own pains more ſenſibly than thoſe of other people. The former are the original ſenſations; the latter the reflected or ſympathetic images of thoſe ſenſations. The former may be ſaid to be the ſubſtance; the latter the ſhadow.

After himſelf, the members of his own family, thoſe who uſually live in the ſame houſe with him, his parents, his children, his brothers and ſiſters, are naturally the

feeling for other people, with great humanity and great benevolence. It is a character ſufficiently underſtood, and requires no further explanation. In the preſent ſection I ſhall only endeavour to explain the foundation of that order which nature ſeems to have traced out for the diſtribution of our good offices, or for the direction and employment of our very limited powers of beneficence: firſt, towards individuals; and ſecondly, towards ſocieties.

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the utmoſt importance to their common happineſs; and, by the wiſdom of nature, the ſame ſituation, by obliging them to accommodate to one another, renders that ſympathy more habitual, and thereby more lively, more diſtinct, and more determinate.

The children of brothers and ſiſters are naturally connected by the friendſhip which, after ſeparating into different families, continues to take place between their parents. Their good agreement improves the enjoyment of that friendſhip; their diſcord would diſturb it. As they ſeldom live in the ſame family, however, though of more importance to one another, than to the greater part of other people, they are of much leſs than brothers and ſiſters. As their mutual ſympathy is leſs neceſſary, ſo it is leſs habitual, and therefore proportionably weaker.

The children of couſins, being ſtill leſs connected, are of ſtill leſs importance to one another; and the affection gradually di-

miniſhes as the relation grows more and more remote.

What is called affection, is in reality nothing but habitual ſympathy. Our concern in the happineſs or miſery of thoſe who are the objects of what we call our affections; our deſire to promote the one, and to prevent the other; are either the actual feeling of that habitual ſympathy, or the neceſſary conſequences of that feeling. Relations being uſually placed in ſituations which naturally create this habitual ſympathy, it is expected that a ſuitable degree of affection ſhould take place among them. We generally find that it actually does take place; we therefore naturally expect that it ſhould; and we are, upon that account, more ſhocked when, upon any occaſion, we find that it does not. The general rule is eſtabliſhed, that perſons related to one another in a certain degree, ought always to be affected towards one another in a certain manner, and that there is always the higheſt impropriety, and ſometimes even a ſort of impiety, in their being

being affected in a different manner. A parent without parental tenderneſs, a child devoid of all filial reverence, appear monſters, the objects, not of hatred only, but of horror.

Though in a particular inſtance, the circumſtances which uſually produce thoſe natural affections, as they are called, may, by ſome accident, not have taken place, yet reſpect for the general rule will frequently, in ſome meaſure, ſupply their place, and produce ſomething which, though not altogether the ſame, may bear, however, a very conſiderable reſemblance to thoſe affections. A father is apt to be leſs attached to a child, who, by ſome accident, has been ſeparated from him in its infancy, and who does not return to him till it is grown up to manhood. The father is apt to feel leſs paternal tenderneſs for the child; the child, leſs filial reverence for the father. Brothers and ſiſters, when they have been educated in diſtant countries, are apt to feel a ſimilar diminution of affection. With the dutiful and the virtuous, however, reſpect for

for the general rule will frequently produce ſomething which, though by no means the ſame, yet may very much reſemble thoſe natural affections. Even during the ſeparation, the father and the child, the brothers or the ſiſters, are by no means indifferent to one another. They all conſider one another as perſons to and from whom certain affections are due, and they live in the hopes of being ſome time or another in a ſituation to enjoy that friendſhip which ought naturally to have taken place among perſons ſo nearly connected. Till they meet, the abſent ſon, the abſent brother, are frequently the favourite ſon, the favourite brother. They have never offended, or, if they have, it is ſo long ago, that the offence is forgotten, as ſome childiſh trick not worth the remembering. Every account they have heard of one another, if conveyed by people of any tolerable good nature, has been, in the higheſt degree, flattering and favourable. The abſent ſon, the abſent brother, is not like other ordinary ſons and brothers; but an all-perfect ſon, an all-perfect brother; and the moſt romantic hopes

are

are entertained of the happineſs to be enjoyed in the friendſhip and converſation of ſuch perſons. When they meet, it is often with ſo ſtrong a diſpoſition to conceive that habitual ſympathy which conſtitutes the family affection, that they are very apt to fancy they have actually conceived it, and to behave to one another as if they had. Time and experience, however, I am afraid, too frequently undeceive them. Upon a more familiar acquaintance, they frequently diſcover in one another habits, humours, and inclinations, different from what they expected, to which, from want of habitual ſympathy, from want of the real principle and foundation of what is properly called family-affection, they cannot now eaſily accommodate themſelves. They have never lived in the ſituation which almoſt neceſſarily forces that eaſy accommodation, and though they may now be ſincerely deſirous to aſſume it, they have really become incapable of doing ſo. Their familiar converſation and intercourſe ſoon become leſs pleaſing to them, and, upon that account, leſs frequent. They may continue to live with

with one another in the mutual exchange of all eſſential good offices, and with every other external appearance of decent regard. But that cordial ſatisfaction, that delicious ſympathy, that confidential openneſs and eaſe, which naturally take place in the converſation of thoſe who have lived long and familiarly with one another, it ſeldom happens that they can completely enjoy.

It is only, however, with the dutiful and the virtuous, that the general rule has even this ſlender authority. With the diſſipated, the profligate, and the vain, it is entirely diſregarded. They are ſo far from reſpecting it, that they ſeldom talk of it but with the moſt indecent deriſion; and an early and long ſeparation of this kind never fails to eſtrange them moſt completely from one another. With ſuch perſons, reſpect for the general rule can at beſt produce only a cold and affected civility (a very ſlender ſemblance of real regard); and even this, the ſlighteſt offence, the ſmalleſt oppoſition of intereſt, commonly puts an end to altogether.

The education of boys at diſtant great ſchools, of young men at diſtant colleges, of young ladies in diſtant nunneries and boarding-ſchools, ſeems, in the higher ranks of life, to have hurt moſt eſſentially the domeſtic morals, and conſequently the domeſtic happineſs, both of France and England. Do you wiſh to educate your children to be dutiful to their parents, to be kind and affectionate to their brothers and ſiſters? put them under the neceſſity of being dutiful children, of being kind and affectionate brothers and ſiſters: educate them in your own houſe. From their parent's houſe they may, with propriety and advantage, go out every day to attend public ſchools: but let their dwelling be always at home. Reſpect for you muſt always impoſe a very uſeful reſtraint upon their conduct; and reſpect for them may frequently impoſe no uſeleſs reſtraint upon your own. Surely no acquirement, which can poſſibly be derived from what is called a public education, can make any ſort of compenſation for what is almoſt certainly and neceſſarily loſt by it. Domeſtic education

education is the inſtitution of nature; public education, the contrivance of man. It is ſurely unneceſſary to ſay, which is likely to be the wiſeſt.

In ſome tragedies and romances, we meet with many beautiful and intereſting ſcenes, founded upon, what is called, the force of blood, or upon the wonderful affection which near relations are ſuppoſed to conceive for one another, even before they know that they have any ſuch connection. This force of blood, however, I am afraid, exiſts no-where but in tragedies and romances. Even in tragedies and romances, it is never ſuppoſed to take place between any relations, but thoſe who are naturally bred up in the ſame houſe; between parents and children, between brothers and ſiſters. To imagine any ſuch myſterious affection between couſins, or even between aunts or uncles, and nephews or nieces, would be too ridiculous.

In paſtoral countries, and in all countries where the authority of law is not alone

alone ſufficient to give perfect ſecurity to every member of the ſtate, all the different branches of the ſame family commonly chuſe to live in the neighbourhood of one another. Their aſſociation is frequently neceſſary for their common defence. They are all, from the higheſt to the loweſt, of more or leſs importance to one another. Their concord ſtrengthens their neceſſary aſſociation; their diſcord always weakens, and might deſtroy it. They have more intercourſe with one another, than with the members of any other tribe. The remoteſt members of the ſame tribe claim ſome connection with one another; and, where all other circumſtances are equal, expect to be treated with more diſtinguiſhed attention than is due to thoſe who have no ſuch pretenſions. It is not many years ago that, in the Highlands of Scotland, the Chieftain uſed to conſider the pooreſt man of his clan, as his couſin and relation. The ſame extenſive regard to kindred is ſaid to take place among the Tartars, the Arabs, the Turkomans, and, I believe, among all other nations who are nearly in the

the ſame ſtate of ſociety in which the Scots Highlanders were about the beginning of the preſent century.

In commercial countries, where the authority of law is always perfectly ſufficient to protect the meaneſt man in the ſtate, the deſcendants of the ſame family, having no ſuch motive for keeping together, naturally ſeparate and diſperſe, as intereſt or inclination may direct. They ſoon ceaſe to be of importance to one another; and, in a few generations, not only loſe all care about one another, but all remembrance of their common origin, and of the connection which took place among their anceſtors. Regard for remote relations becomes, in every country, leſs and leſs, according as this ſtate of civilization has been longer and more completely eſtabliſhed. It has been longer and more completely eſtabliſhed in England than in Scotland; and remote relations are, accordingly, more conſidered in the latter country than in the former, though, in this reſpect, the difference between the two countries is

growing leſs and leſs every day. Great lords, indeed, are, in every country, proud of remembering and acknowledging their connection with one another, however remote. The remembrance of ſuch illuſtrious relations flatters not a little the family pride of them all; and it is neither from affection, nor from any thing which reſembles affection, but from the moſt frivolous and childiſh of all vanities, that this remembrance is ſo carefully kept up. Should ſome more humble, though, perhaps, much nearer kinſman, preſume to put ſuch great men in mind of his relation to their family, they ſeldom fail to tell him that they are bad genealogiſts, and miſerably ill-informed concerning their own family hiſtory. It is not in that order, I am afraid, that we are to expect any extraordinary extenſion of, what is called, natural affection.

I conſider what is called natural affection as more the effect of the moral than of the ſuppoſed phyſical connection between the parent and the child. A jealous huſband,

band, indeed, notwithſtanding the moral connection, notwithſtanding the child's having been educated in his own houſe, often regards, with hatred and averſion, that unhappy child which he ſuppoſes to be the offspring of his wife's infidelity. It is the laſting monument of a moſt diſagreeable adventure; of his own diſhonour, and of the diſgrace of his family.

Among well-diſpoſed people, the neceſſity or conveniency of mutual accommodation, very frequently produces a friendſhip not unlike that which takes place among thoſe who are born to live in the ſame family. Colleagues in office, partners in trade, call one another brothers; and frequently feel towards one another as if they really were ſo. Their good agreement is an advantage to all; and, if they are tolerably reaſonable people, they are naturally diſpoſed to agree. We expect that they ſhould do ſo; and their diſagreement is a ſort of a ſmall ſcandal. The Romans expreſſed this ſort of attachment by the word *neceſſitudo*, which, from the etymo-

logy, ſeems to denote that it was impoſed by the neceſſity of the ſituation.

Even the trifling circumſtance of living in the ſame neighbourhood, has ſome effect of the ſame kind. We reſpect the face of a man whom we ſee every day, provided he has never offended us. Neighbours can be very convenient, and they can be very troubleſome, to one another. If they are good ſort of people, they are naturally diſpoſed to agree. We expect their good agreement; and to be a bad neighbour is a very bad character. There are certain ſmall good offices, accordingly, which are univerſally allowed to be due to a neighbour in preference to any other perſon who has no ſuch connection.

This natural diſpoſition to accommodate and to aſſimilate, as much as we can, our own ſentiments, principles, and feelings, to thoſe which we ſee fixed and rooted in the perſons whom we are obliged to live and converſe a great deal with, is the cauſe of the contagious effects of both good and bad com-

company. The man who aſſociates chiefly with the wiſe and the virtuous, though he may not himſelf become either wiſe or virtuous, cannot help conceiving a certain reſpect at leaſt for wiſdom and virtue; and the man who aſſociates chiefly with the profligate and the diſſolute, though he may not himſelf become profligate and diſſolute, muſt ſoon loſe, at leaſt, all his original abhorrence of profligacy and diſſolution of manners. The ſimilarity of family characters, which we ſo frequently ſee tranſmitted through ſeveral ſucceſſive generations, may, perhaps, be partly owing to this diſpoſition, to aſſimilate ourſelves to thoſe whom we are obliged to live and converſe a great deal with. The family character, however, like the family countenance, ſeems to be owing, not altogether to the moral, but partly too to the phyſical connection. The family countenance is certainly altogether owing to the latter.

But of all attachments to an individual, that which is founded altogether upon eſteem and approbation of his good conduct:

and behaviour, confirmed by much experience and long acquaintance, is, by far, the moſt reſpectable. Such friendſhips, ariſing not from a conſtrained ſympathy, not from a ſympathy which has been aſſumed and rendered habitual for the ſake of convenience and accommodation; but from a natural ſympathy, from an involuntary feeling that the perſons to whom we attach ourſelves are the natural and proper objects of eſteem and approbation; can exiſt only among men of virtue. Men of virtue only can feel that entire confidence in the conduct and behaviour of one another, which can, at all times, aſſure them that they can never either offend or be offended by one another. Vice is always capricious: virtue only is regular and orderly. The attachment which is founded upon the love of virtue, as it is certainly, of all attachments, the moſt virtuous; ſo it is likewiſe the happieſt, as well as the moſt permanent and ſecure. Such friendſhips need not be confined to a ſingle perſon, but may ſafely embrace all the wiſe and virtuous, with whom we have been long and

and intimately acquainted, and upon whoſe wiſdom and virtue we can, upon that account, entirely depend. They who would confine friendſhip to two perſons, ſeem to confound the wiſe ſecurity of friendſhip with the jealouſy and folly of love. The haſty, fond, and fooliſh intimacies of young people, founded, commonly, upon ſome ſlight ſimilarity of character, altogether unconnected with good conduct, upon a taſte, perhaps, for the ſame ſtudies, the ſame amuſements, the ſame diverſions, or upon their agreement in ſome ſingular principle or opinion, not commonly adopted; thoſe intimacies which a freak begins, and which a freak puts an end to, how agreeable ſoever they may appear while they laſt, can by no means deſerve the ſacred and venerable name of friendſhip.

Of all the perſons, however, whom nature points out for our peculiar beneficence, there are none to whom it ſeems more properly directed than to thoſe whoſe bene-

ficence we have ourſelves already experienced. Nature, which formed men for that mutual kindneſs, ſo neceſſary for their happineſs, renders every man the peculiar object of kindneſs, to the perſons to whom he himſelf has been kind. Though their gratitude ſhould not always correſpond to his beneficence, yet the ſenſe of his merit, the ſympathetic gratitude of the impartial ſpectator, will always correſpond to it. The general indignation of other people, againſt the baſeneſs of their ingratitude, will even, ſometimes, increaſe the general ſenſe of his merit. No benevolent man ever loſt altogether the fruits of his benevolence. If he does not always gather them from the perſons from whom he ought to have gathered them, he ſeldom fails to gather them, and with a tenfold increaſe, from other people. Kindneſs is the parent of kindneſs; and if to be beloved by our brethren be the great object of our ambition, the ſureſt way of obtaining it is, by our conduct to ſhow that we really love them.

After

After the perſons who are recommended to our beneficence, either by their connection with ourſelves, by their perſonal qualities, or by their paſt ſervices, come thoſe who are pointed out, not indeed to, what is called, our friendſhip, but to our benevolent attention and good offices; thoſe who are diſtinguiſhed by their extraordinary ſituation; the greatly fortunate and the greatly unfortunate, the rich and the powerful, the poor and the wretched. The diſtinction of ranks, the peace and order of ſociety, are, in a great meaſure, founded upon the reſpect which we naturally conceive for the former. The relief and conſolation of human miſery depend altogether upon our compaſſion for the latter. The peace and order of ſociety, is of more importance than even the relief of the miſerable. Our reſpect for the great, accordingly, is moſt apt to offend by its exceſs; our fellow-feeling for the miſerable, by its defect. Moraliſts exhort us to charity and compaſſion. They warn us againſt the faſcination of greatneſs. This faſcination, indeed, is ſo powerful, that the rich and

the great are too often preferred to the wiſe and the virtuous. Nature has wiſely judged that the diſtinction of ranks, the peace and order of ſociety, would reſt more ſecurely upon the plain and palpable difference of birth and fortune, than upon the inviſible and often uncertain difference of wiſdom and virtue. The undiſtinguiſhing eyes of the great mob of mankind can well enough perceive the former: it is with difficulty that the nice diſcernment of the wiſe and the virtuous can ſometimes diſtinguiſh the latter. In the order of all thoſe recommendations, the benevolent wiſdom of nature is equally evident.

It may, perhaps, be unneceſſary to obſerve, that the combination of two, or more, of thoſe exciting cauſes of kindneſs, increaſes the kindneſs. The favour and partiality which, when there is no envy in the caſe, we naturally bear to greatneſs, are much increaſed when it is joined with wiſdom and virtue. If, notwithſtanding that wiſdom and virtue, the great man ſhould fall into thoſe misfortunes, thoſe dangers

dangers and diſtreſſes, to which the moſt exalted ſtations are often the moſt expoſed, we are much more deeply intereſted in his fortune than we ſhould be in that of a perſon equally virtuous, but in a more humble ſituation. The moſt intereſting ſubjects of tragedies and romances are the misfortunes of virtuous and magnanimous kings and princes. If, by the wiſdom and manhood of their exertions, they ſhould extricate themſelves from thoſe misfortunes, and recover completely their former ſuperiority and ſecurity, we cannot help viewing them with the moſt enthuſiaſtic and even extravagant admiration. The grief which we felt for their diſtreſs, the joy which we feel for their proſperity, ſeem to combine together in enhancing that partial admiration which we naturally conceive both for the ſtation and the character.

When thoſe different beneficent affections happen to draw different ways, to determine by any preciſe rules in what caſes we ought to comply with the one, and in what with the other, is, perhaps, altogether impoſ-

ſible,

ſible. In what caſes friendſhip ought to yield to gratitude, or gratitude to friendſhip; in what caſes the ſtrongeſt of all natural affections ought to yield to a regard for the ſafety of thoſe ſuperiors upon whoſe ſafety often depends that of the whole ſociety; and in what caſes natural affection may, without impropriety, prevail over that regard; muſt be left altogether to the deciſion of the man within the breaſt, the ſuppoſed impartial ſpectator, the great judge and arbiter of our conduct. If we place ourſelves completely in his ſituation, if we really view ourſelves with his eyes, and as he views us, and liſten with diligent and reverential attention to what he ſuggeſts to us, his voice will never deceive us. We ſhall ſtand in need of no caſuiſtic rules to direct our conduct. Theſe it is often impoſſible to accommodate to all the different ſhades and gradations of circumſtance, character, and ſituation, to differences and diſtinctions which, though not imperceptible, are, by their nicety and delicacy, often altogether undefinable. In that beautiful tragedy of Voltaire, the Orphan of China, while

while we admire the magnanimity of Zamti, who is willing to ſacrifice the life of his own child, in order to preſerve that of the only feeble remnant of his ancient ſovereigns and maſters; we not only pardon, but love the maternal tenderneſs of Idame, who, at the riſque of diſcovering the important ſecret of her huſband, reclaims her infant from the cruel hands of the Tartars, into which it had been delivered.

CHAP. II.

Of the order in which Societies are by nature recommended to our Beneficence.

THE ſame principles that direct the order in which individuals are recommended to our beneficence, direct that likewiſe in which ſocieties are recommended to it. Thoſe to which it is, or may be of moſt importance, are firſt and principally recommended to it.

The

The ſtate or ſovereignty in which we have been born and educated, and under the protection of which we continue to live, is, in ordinary caſes, the greateſt ſociety upon whoſe happineſs or miſery, our good or bad conduct can have much influence. It is accordingly, by nature, moſt ſtrongly recommended to us. Not only we ourſelves, but all the objects of our kindeſt affections, our children, our parents, our relations, our friends, our benefactors, all thoſe whom we naturally love and revere the moſt, are commonly comprehended within it; and their proſperity and ſafety depend in ſome meaſure upon its proſperity and ſafety. It is by nature, therefore, endeared to us, not only by all our ſelfiſh, but by all our private benevolent affections. Upon account of our own connexion with it, its proſperity and glory ſeem to reflect ſome ſort of honour upon ourſelves. When we compare it with other ſocieties of the ſame kind, we are proud of its ſuperiority, and mortified in ſome degree, if it appears in any reſpect below them. All the illuſtrious characters which it has produced in former

former times (for againſt thoſe of our own times envy may ſometimes prejudice us a little), its warriors, its ſtateſmen, its poets, its philoſophers, and men of letters of all kinds; we are diſpoſed to view with the moſt partial admiration, and to rank them (ſometimes moſt unjuſtly) above thoſe of all other nations. The patriot who lays down his life for the ſafety, or even for the vainglory of this ſociety, appears to act with the moſt exact propriety. He appears to view himſelf in the light in which the impartial ſpectator naturally and neceſſarily views him, as but one of the multitude, in the eye of that equitable judge, of no more conſequence than any other in it, but bound at all times to ſacrifice and devote himſelf to the ſafety, to the ſervice, and even to the glory of the greater number. But though this ſacrifice appears to be perfectly juſt and proper, we know how difficult it is to make it, and how few people are capable of making it. His conduct, therefore, excites not only our entire approbation, but our higheſt wonder and admiration, and ſeems to merit all the applauſe which can be due to the moſt heroic virtue. The

traitor, on the contrary, who, in ſome peculiar ſituation, fancies he can promote his own little intereſt by betraying to the public enemy that of his native country; who, regardleſs of the judgment of the man within the breaſt, prefers himſelf, in this reſpect ſo ſhamefully and ſo baſely, to all thoſe with whom he has any connexion; appears to be of all villains the moſt deteſtable.

The love of our own nation often diſpoſes us to view, with the moſt malignant jealouſy and envy, the proſperity and aggrandiſement of any other neighbouring nation. Independent and neighbouring nations, having no common ſuperior to decide their diſputes, all live in continual dread and ſuſpicion of one another. Each ſovereign, expecting little juſtice from his neighbours, is diſpoſed to treat them with as little as he expects from them. The regard for the laws of nations, or for thoſe rules which independent ſtates profeſs or pretend to think themſelves bound to obſerve in their dealings with one another, is often very little more than mere pretence and profeſſion.

From

From the ſmalleſt intereſt, upon the ſlighteſt provocation, we ſee thoſe rules every day, either evaded or directly violated without ſhame or remorſe. Each nation foreſees, or imagines it foreſees, its own ſubjugation in the increaſing power and aggrandiſement of any of its neighbours; and the mean principle of national prejudice is often founded upon the noble one of the love of our own country. The ſentence with which the elder Cato is ſaid to have concluded every ſpeech which he made in the ſenate, whatever might be the ſubject, "*It is my opinion likewiſe that Carthage ought* "*to be deſtroyed*," was the natural expreſſion of the ſavage patriotiſm of a ſtrong but coarſe mind, enraged almoſt to madneſs againſt a foreign nation from which his own had ſuffered ſo much. The more humane ſentence with which Scipio Naſica is ſaid to have concluded all his ſpeeches, "*It is my* "*opinion likewiſe that Carthage ought not to* "*be deſtroyed*," was the liberal expreſſion of a more enlarged and enlightened mind, who felt no averſion to the proſperity even of an old enemy, when reduced to a ſtate

which could nó longer be formidable to Rome. France and England may each of them have ſome reaſon to dread the increaſe of the naval and military power of the other; but for either of them to envy the internal happineſs and proſperity of the other, the cultivation of its lands, the advancement of its manufactures, the increaſe of its commerce, the ſecurity and number of its ports and harbours, its proficiency in all the liberal arts and ſciences, is ſurely beneath the dignity of two ſuch great nations. Theſe are the real improvements of the world we live in. Mankind are benefited, human nature is ennobled by them. In ſuch improvements each nation ought, not only to endeavour itſelf to excel, but from the love of mankind, to promote, inſtead of obſtructing the excellence of its neighbours. Theſe are all proper objects of national emulation, not of national prejudice or envy.

The love of our own country ſeems not to be derived from the love of mankind. The former ſentiment is altogether independent of the latter, and ſeems ſometimes even

even to diſpoſe us to act inconſiſtently with it. France may contain, perhaps, near three times the number of inhabitants which Great Britain contains. In the great ſociety of mankind, therefore, the proſperity of France ſhould appear to be an object of much greater importance than that of Great Britain. The Britiſh ſubject, however, who, upon that account, ſhould prefer upon all occaſions the proſperity of the former to that of the latter country, would not be thought a good citizen of Great Britain. We do not love our country merely as a part of the great ſociety of mankind: we love it for its own ſake, and independently of any ſuch conſideration. That wiſdom which contrived the ſyſtem of human affections, as well as that of every other part of nature, ſeems to have judged that the intereſt of the great ſociety of mankind would be beſt promoted by directing the principal attention of each individual to that particular portion of it, which was moſt within the ſphere both of his abilities and of his underſtanding.

National prejudices and hatreds ſeldom extend beyond neighbouring nations. We very weakly and fooliſhly, perhaps, call the French our natural enemies; and they perhaps, as weakly and fooliſhly, conſider us in the ſame manner. Neither they nor we bear any ſort of envy to the proſperity of China or Japan. It very rarely happens, however, that our good-will towards ſuch diſtant countries can be exerted with much effect.

The moſt extenſive public benevolence which can commonly be exerted with any conſiderable effect, is that of the ſtateſmen, who project and form alliances among neighbouring or not very diſtant nations, for the preſervation either of, what is called, the balance of power, or of the general peace and tranquillity of the ſtates within the circle of their negotiations. The ſtateſmen, however, who plan and execute ſuch treaties have ſeldom any thing in view, but the intereſt of their reſpective countries. Sometimes, indeed, their views are more extenſive. The Count d'Avaux, the plenipoten-

nipotentiary of France, at the treaty of Munſter, would have been willing to ſacrifice his life (according to the Cardinal de Retz, a man not over-credulous in the virtue of other people), in order to have reſtored, by that treaty, the general tranquillity of Europe. King William ſeems to have had a real zeal for the liberty and independency of the greater part of the ſovereign ſtates of Europe; which, perhaps, might be a good deal ſtimulated by his particular averſion to France, the ſtate from which, during his time, that liberty and independency were principally in danger. Some ſhare of the ſame ſpirit ſeems to have deſcended to the firſt miniſtry of Queen Anne.

Every independent ſtate is divided into many different orders and ſocieties, each of which has its own particular powers, privileges, and immunities. Every individual is naturally more attached to his own particular order or ſociety, than to any other. His own intereſt, his own vanity, the intereſt and vanity of many of his

friends and companions, are commonly a good deal connected with it. He is ambitious to extend its privileges and immunities. He is zealous to defend them againſt the encroachments of every other order or ſociety.

Upon the manner in which any ſtate is divided into the different orders and ſocieties which compoſe it, and upon the particular diſtribution which has been made of their reſpective powers, privileges, and immunities, depends, what is called, the conſtitution of that particular ſtate.

Upon the ability of each particular order or ſociety to maintain its own powers, privileges, and immunities, againſt the encroachments of every other, depends the ſtability of that particular conſtitution. That particular conſtitution is neceſſarily more or leſs altered, whenever any of its ſubordinate parts is either raiſed above or depreſſed below whatever had been its former rank and condition.

All

All thoſe different orders and ſocieties are dependent upon the ſtate to which they owe their ſecurity and protection. That they are all ſubordinate to that ſtate, and eſtabliſhed only in ſubſerviency to its proſperity and preſervation, is a truth acknowledged by the moſt partial member of every one of them. It may often, however, be hard to convince him that the proſperity and preſervation of the ſtate require any diminution of the powers, privileges, and immunities of his own particular order or ſociety. This partiality, though it may ſometimes be unjuſt, may not, upon that account, be uſeleſs. It checks the ſpirit of innovation. It tends to preſerve whatever is the eſtabliſhed balance among the different orders and ſocieties into which the ſtate is divided; and while it ſometimes appears to obſtruct ſome alterations of government which may be faſhionable and popular at the time, it contributes in reality to the ſtability and permanency of the whole ſyſtem.

The love of our country ſeems, in ordinary caſes, to involve in it two different principles; firſt, a certain reſpect and reverence for that conſtitution or form of government which is actually eſtabliſhed; and ſecondly, an earneſt deſire to render the condition of our fellow-citizens as ſafe, reſpectable, and happy as we can. He is not a citizen who is not diſpoſed to reſpect the laws and to obey the civil magiſtrate; and he is certainly not a good citizen who does not wiſh to promote, by every means in his power, the welfare of the whole ſociety of his fellow-citizens.

In peaceable and quiet times, thoſe two principles generally coincide and lead to the ſame conduct. The ſupport of the eſtabliſhed government ſeems evidently the beſt expedient for maintaining the ſafe, reſpectable, and happy ſituation of our fellow-citizens; when we ſee that this government actually maintains them in that ſituation. But in times of public diſcontent, faction, and diſorder, thoſe two different principles may draw different ways, and even a wiſe man

man may be diſpoſed to think ſome alteration neceſſary in that conſtitution or form of government, which in its actual condition, appears plainly unable to maintain the public tranquillity. In ſuch caſes, however, it often requires, perhaps, the higheſt effort of political wiſdom to determine when a real patriot ought to ſupport and endeavour to re-eſtabliſh the authority of the old ſyſtem, and when he ought to give way to the more daring, but often dangerous ſpirit of innovation.

Foreign war and civil faction are the two ſituations which afford the moſt ſplendid opportunities for the diſplay of public ſpirit. The hero who ſerves his country ſucceſſfully in foreign war gratifies the wiſhes of the whole nation, and is, upon that account, the object of univerſal gratitude and admiration. In times of civil diſcord, the leaders of the contending parties, though they may be admired by one half of their fellow-citizens, are commonly execrated by the other. Their characters and the merit of their reſpective ſervices appear commonly more doubtful. The glory which is acquired by foreign

foreign war is, upon this account, almoſt always more pure and more ſplendid than that which can be acquired in civil faction.

The leader of the ſucceſsful party, however, if he has authority enough to prevail upon his own friends to act with proper temper and moderation (which he frequently has not), may ſometimes render to his country a ſervice much more eſſential and important than the greateſt victories and the moſt extenſive conqueſts. He may re-eſtabliſh and improve the conſtitution, and from the very doubtful and ambiguous character of the leader of a party, he may aſſume the greateſt and nobleſt of all characters, that of the reformer and legiſlator of a great ſtate; and, by the wiſdom of his inſtitutions, ſecure the internal tranquillity and happineſs of his fellow-citizens for many ſucceeding generations.

Amidſt the turbulence and diſorder of faction, a certain ſpirit of ſyſtem is apt to mix itſelf with that public ſpirit which is founded upon the love of humanity, upon a real fellow-feeling with the inconveni-

ences

ences and diſtreſſes to which ſome of our fellow-citizens may be expoſed. This ſpirit of ſyſtem commonly takes the direction of that more gentle public ſpirit; always animates it, and often inflames it even to the madneſs of fanaticiſm. The leaders of the diſcontented party ſeldom fail to hold out ſome plauſible plan of reformation which, they pretend, will not only remove the inconveniences and relieve the diſtreſſes immediately complained of, but will prevent, in all time coming, any return of the like inconveniences and diſtreſſes. They often propoſe, upon this account, to new-model the conſtitution, and to alter, in ſome of its moſt eſſential parts, that ſyſtem of government under which the ſubjects of a great empire have enjoyed, perhaps, peace, ſecurity, and even glory, during the courſe of ſeveral centuries together. The great body of the party are commonly intoxicated with the imaginary beauty of this ideal ſyſtem, of which they have no experience, but which has been repreſented to them in all the moſt dazzling colours in which the eloquence of their leaders

could paint it. Thoſe leaders themſelves, though they originally may have meant nothing but their own aggrandizement, become many of them in time the dupes of their own ſophiſtry, and are as eager for this great reformation as the weakeſt and fooliſheſt of their followers. Even though the leaders ſhould have preſerved their own heads, as indeed they commonly do, free from this fanaticiſm, yet they dare not always diſappoint the expectation of their followers; but are often obliged, though contrary to their principle and their conſcience, to act as if they were under the common deluſion. The violence of the party, refuſing all palliatives, all temperaments, all reaſonable accommodations, by requiring too much frequently obtains nothing; and thoſe inconveniences and diſtreſſes which, with a little moderation, might in a great meaſure have been removed and relieved, are left altogether without the hope of a remedy.

The man whoſe public ſpirit is prompted altogether by humanity and benevolence, will

will reſpect the eſtabliſhed powers and privileges even of individuals, and ſtill more thoſe of the great orders and ſocieties, into which the ſtate is divided. Though he ſhould conſider ſome of them as in ſome meaſure abuſive, he will content himſelf with moderating, what he often cannot annihilate without great violence. When he cannot conquer the rooted prejudices of the people by reaſon and perſuaſion, he will not attempt to ſubdue them by force; but will religiouſly obſerve what, by Cicero, is juſtly called the divine maxim of Plato, never to uſe violence to his country no more than to his parents. He will accommodate, as well as he can, his public arrangements to the confirmed habits and prejudices of the people; and will remedy, as well as he can, the inconveniences which may flow from the want of thoſe regulations which the people are averſe to ſubmit to. When he cannot eſtabliſh the right, he will not diſdain to ameliorate the wrong; but like Solon, when he cannot eſtabliſh the beſt ſyſtem of laws, he will endeavour

to eſtabliſh the beſt that the people can bear.

The man of ſyſtem, on the contrary, is apt to be very wiſe in his own conceit; and is often ſo enamoured with the ſuppoſed beauty of his own ideal plan of government, that he cannot ſuffer the ſmalleſt deviation from any part of it. He goes on to eſtabliſh it completely and in all its parts, without any regard either to the great intereſts, or to the ſtrong prejudices which may oppoſe it. He ſeems to imagine that he can arrange the different members of a great ſociety with as much eaſe as the hand arranges the different pieces upon a cheſs-board. He does not conſider that the pieces upon the cheſs-board have no other principle of motion beſides that which the hand impreſſes upon them; but that, in the great cheſs-board of human ſociety, every ſingle piece has a principle of motion of its own, altogether different from that which the legiſlature might chuſe to impreſs upon it. If thoſe two principles coincide

cide and act in the ſame direction, the game of human ſociety will go on eaſily and harmoniouſly, and is very likely to be happy and ſucceſsful. If they are oppoſite or different, the game will go on miſerably, and the ſociety muſt be at all times in the higheſt degree of diſorder.

Some general, and even ſyſtematical, idea of the perfection of policy and law, may no doubt be neceſſary for directing the views of the ſtateſman. But to inſiſt upon eſtabliſhing, and upon eſtabliſhing all at once, and in ſpite of all oppoſition, every thing which that idea may ſeem to require, muſt often be the higheſt degree of arrogance. It is to erect his own judgment into the ſupreme ſtandard of right and wrong. It is to fancy himſelf the only wiſe and worthy man in the commonwealth, and that his fellow-citizens ſhould accommodate themſelves to him and not he to them. It is upon this account, that of all political ſpeculators, ſovereign princes are by far the moſt dangerous. This arrogance is perfectly familiar to them. They

They entertain no doubt of the immenſe ſuperiority of their own judgment. When ſuch imperial and royal reformers, therefore, condeſcend to contemplate the conſtitution of the country which is committed to their government, they ſeldom ſee any thing ſo wrong in it as the obſtructions which it may ſometimes oppoſe to the execution of their own will. They hold in contempt the divine maxim of Plato, and conſider the ſtate as made for themſelves, not themſelves for the ſtate. The great object of their reformation, therefore, is to remove thoſe obſtructions; to reduce the authority of the nobility; to take away the privileges of cities and provinces, and to render both the greateſt individuals and the greateſt orders of the ſtate, as incapable of oppoſing their commands, as the weakeſt and moſt inſignificant.

CHAP. III.

Of univerſal Benevolence.

THOUGH our effectual good offices can very ſeldom be extended to any wider ſociety than that of our own country; our good-will is circumſcribed by no boundary, but may embrace the immenſity of the univerſe. We cannot form the idea of any innocent and ſenſible being, whoſe happineſs we ſhould not deſire, or to whoſe miſery, when diſtinctly brought home to the imagination, we ſhould not have ſome degree of averſion. The idea of a miſchievous, though ſenſible being, indeed, naturally provokes our hatred: but the ill-will which, in this caſe, we bear to it, is really the effect of our univerſal benevolence. It is the effect of the ſympathy which we feel with the miſery and reſentment of thoſe other innocent and ſenſible beings, whoſe happineſs is diſturbed by its malice.

This univerſal benevolence, how noble and generous ſoever, can be the ſource of no ſolid happineſs to any man who is not thoroughly convinced that all the inhabitants of the univerſe, the meaneſt as well as the greateſt, are under the immediate care and protection of that great, benevolent, and all-wiſe Being, who directs all the movements of nature; and who is determined, by his own unalterable perfections, to maintain in it, at all times, the greateſt poſſible quantity of happineſs. To this univerſal benevolence, on the contrary, the very ſuſpicion of a fatherleſs world, muſt be the moſt melancholy of all reflections; from the thought that all the unknown regions of infinite and incomprehenſible ſpace may be filled with nothing but endleſs miſery and wretchedneſs. All the ſplendour of the higheſt proſperity can never enlighten the gloom with which ſo dreadful an idea muſt neceſſarily overſhadow the imagination; nor, in a wiſe and virtuous man, can all the ſorrow of the moſt afflicting adverſity ever dry up the joy which neceſſarily ſprings from the habitual

habitual and thorough conviction of the truth of the contrary ſyſtem.

The wiſe and virtuous man is at all times willing that his own private intereſt ſhould be ſacrificed to the public intereſt of his own particular order or ſociety. He is at all times willing, too, that the intereſt of this order or ſociety ſhould be ſacrificed to the greater intereſt of the ſtate or ſovereignty, of which it is only a ſubordinate part. He ſhould, therefore, be equally willing that all thoſe inferior intereſts ſhould be ſacrificed to the greater intereſt of the univerſe, to the intereſt of that great ſociety of all ſenſible and intelligent beings, of which God himſelf is the immediate adminiſtrator and director. If he is deeply impreſſed with the habitual and thorough conviction that this benevolent and all-wiſe Being can admit into the ſyſtem of his government, no partial evil which is not neceſſary for the univerſal good, he muſt conſider all the misfortunes which may befal himſelf, his friends, his ſociety, or his country, as neceſſary for the proſperity of the univerſe, and therefore as what he ought, not only

to ſubmit to with reſignation, but as what he himſelf, if he had known all the connexions and dependencies of things, ought ſincerely and devoutly to have wiſhed for.

Nor does this magnanimous reſignation to the will of the great Director of the univerſe, ſeem in any reſpect beyond the reach of human nature. Good ſoldiers, who both love and truſt their general, frequently march with more gaiety and alacrity to the forlorn ſtation, from which they never expect to return, than they would to one where there was neither difficulty nor danger. In marching to the latter, they could feel no other ſentiment than that of the dulneſs of ordinary duty: in marching to the former, they feel that they are making the nobleſt exertion which it is poſſible for man to make. They know that their general would not have ordered them upon this ſtation, had it not been neceſſary for the ſafety of the army, for the ſucceſs of the war. They cheerfully ſacrifice their own little ſyſtems to the proſperity of a greater ſyſtem. They take an affectionate leave

leave of their comrades, to whom they wiſh all happineſs and ſucceſs; and march out, not only with ſubmiſſive obedience, but often with ſhouts of the moſt joyful exultation, to that fatal, but ſplendid and honourable ſtation to which they are appointed. No conductor of an army can deſerve more unlimited truſt, more ardent and zealous affection, than the great Conductor of the univerſe. In the greateſt public as well as private diſaſters, a wiſe man ought to conſider that he himſelf, his friends and countrymen, have only been ordered upon the forlorn ſtation of the univerſe; that had it not been neceſſary for the good of the whole, they would not have been ſo ordered; and that it is their duty, not only with humble reſignation to ſubmit to this allotment, but to endeavour to embrace it with alacrity and joy. A wiſe man ſhould ſurely be capable of doing what a good ſoldier holds himſelf at all times in readineſs to do.

The idea of that divine Being, whoſe benevolence and wiſdom have, from all

eternity, contrived and conducted the immenſe machine of the univerſe, ſo as at all times to produce the greateſt poſſible quantity of happineſs, is certainly of all the objects of human contemplation by far the moſt ſublime. Every other thought neceſſarily appears mean in the compariſon. The man whom we believe to be principally occupied in this ſublime contemplation, ſeldoms fails to be the object of our higheſt veneration; and though his life ſhould be altogether contemplative, we often regard him with a ſort of religious reſpect much ſuperior to that with which we look upon the moſt active and uſeful ſervant of the commonwealth. The Meditations of Marcus Antoninus, which turn principally upon this ſubject, have contributed more, perhaps, to the general admiration of his character, than all the different tranſactions of his juſt, merciful, and beneficent reign.

The adminiſtration of the great ſyſtem of the univerſe, however, the care of the univerſal happineſs of all rational and ſenſible beings, is the buſineſs of God and not

not of man. To man is allotted a much humbler department, but one much more ſuitable to the weakneſs of his powers, and to the narrowneſs of his comprehenſion; the care of his own happineſs, of that of his family, his friends, his country: that he is occupied in contemplating the more ſublime, can never be an excuſe for his neglecting the more humble department; and he muſt not expoſe himſelf to the charge which Avidius Caſſius is ſaid to have brought, perhaps unjuſtly, againſt Marcus Antoninus; that while he employed himſelf in philoſophical ſpeculations, and contemplated the proſperity of the univerſe, he neglected that of the Roman empire. The moſt ſublime ſpeculation of the contemplative philoſopher can ſcarce compenſate the neglect of the ſmalleſt active duty.

SECTION III.

Of Self-command.

THE man who acts according to the rules of perfect prudence, of ſtrict juſtice, and of proper benevolence, may be ſaid to be perfectly virtuous. But the moſt perfect knowledge of thoſe rules will not alone enable him to act in this manner: his own paſſions are very apt to miſlead him; ſometimes to drive him and ſometimes to ſeduce him to violate all the rules which he himſelf, in all his ſober and cool hours, approves of. The moſt perfect knowledge, if it is not ſupported by the moſt perfect ſelf-command, will not always enable him to do his duty.

Some of the beſt of the ancient moraliſts ſeem to have conſidered thoſe paſſions as divided into two different claſſes: firſt, into thoſe which it requires a conſiderable exertion

ertion of ſelf-command to reſtrain even for a ſingle moment; and ſecondly, into thoſe which it is eaſy to reſtrain for a ſingle moment, or even for a ſhort period of time; but which, by their continual and almoſt inceſſant ſolicitations, are, in the courſe of a life, very apt to miſlead into great deviations.

Fear and anger, together with ſome other paſſions which are mixed or connected with them, conſtitute the firſt claſs. The love of eaſe, of pleaſure, of applauſe, and of many other ſelfiſh gratifications, conſtitute the ſecond. Extravagant fear and furious anger, it is often difficult to reſtrain even for a ſingle moment. The love of eaſe, of pleaſure, of applauſe, and other ſelfiſh gratifications, it is always eaſy to reſtrain for a ſingle moment, or even for a ſhort period of time; but, by their continual ſolicitations, they often miſlead us into many weakneſſes which we have afterwards much reaſon to be aſhamed of. The former ſet of paſſions may often be ſaid to drive, the latter, to ſeduce us from our

our duty. The command of the former was, by the ancient moraliſts above alluded to, denominated fortitude, manhood, and ſtrength of mind; that of the latter, temperance, decency, modeſty, and moderation.

The command of each of thoſe two ſets of paſſions, independent of the beauty which it derives from its utility; from its enabling us upon all occaſions to act according to the dictates of prudence, of juſtice, and of proper benevolence; has a beauty of its own, and ſeems to deſerve for its own ſake a certain degree of eſteem and admiration. In the one caſe, the ſtrength and greatneſs of the exertion excites ſome degree of that eſteem and admiration. In the other, the uniformity, the equality and unremitting ſteadineſs of that exertion.

The man who, in danger, in torture, upon the approach of death, preſerves his tranquillity unaltered, and ſuffers no word, no geſture to eſcape him which does not perfectly accord with the feelings of the moſt indifferent ſpectator, neceſſarily commands

mands a very high degree of admiration. If he ſuffers in the cauſe of liberty and juſtice, for the ſake of humanity and the love of his country, the moſt tender compaſſion for his ſufferings, the ſtrongeſt indignation againſt the injuſtice of his perſecutors, the warmeſt ſympathetic gratitude for his beneficent intentions, the higheſt ſenſe of his merit, all join and mix themſelves with the admiration of his magnanimity, and often inflame that ſentiment into the moſt enthuſiaſtic and rapturous veneration. The heroes of ancient and modern hiſtory, who are remembered with the moſt peculiar favour and affection, are, many of them, thoſe who, in the cauſe of truth, liberty, and juſtice, have periſhed upon the ſcaffold, and who behaved there with that eaſe and dignity which became them. Had the enemies of Socrates ſuffered him to die quietly in his bed, the glory even of that great philoſopher might poſſibly never have acquired that dazzling ſplendour in which it has been beheld in all ſucceeding ages. In the Engliſh hiſtory, when we look over the illuſtrious heads

which

which have been engraven by Vertue and Howbraken, there is ſcarce any body, I imagine, who does not feel that the axe, the emblem of having been beheaded, which is engraved under ſome of the moſt illuſtrious of them; under thoſe of the Sir Thomas Mores, of the Rhaleighs, the Ruſſels, the Sydneys, &c. ſheds a real dignity and intereſtingneſs over the characters to which it is affixed, much ſuperior to what they can derive from all the futile ornaments of heraldry, with which they are ſometimes accompanied.

Nor does this magnanimity give luſtre only to the characters of innocent and virtuous men. It draws ſome degree of favourable regard even upon thoſe of the greateſt criminals; and when a robber or highwayman is brought to the ſcaffold, and behaves there with decency and firmneſs, though we perfectly approve of his puniſhment, we often cannot help regretting that a man who poſſeſſed ſuch great and noble powers ſhould have been capable of ſuch mean enormities.

War

War is the great ſchool both for acquiring and exerciſing this ſpecies of magnanimity. Death, as we ſay, is the king of terrors; and the man who has conquered the fear of death, is not likely to loſe his preſence of mind at the approach of any other natural evil. In war, men become familiar with death, and are thereby neceſſarily cured of that ſuperſtitious horror with which it is viewed by the weak and unexperienced. They conſider it merely as the loſs of life, and as no further the object of averſion than as life may happen to be that of deſire. They learn from experience, too, that many ſeemingly great dangers are not ſo great as they appear; and that, with courage, activity, and preſence of mind, there is often a good probability of extricating themſelves with honour from ſituations where at firſt they could ſee no hope. The dread of death is thus greatly diminiſhed; and the confidence or hope of eſcaping it, augmented. They learn to expoſe themſelves to danger with leſs reluctance. They are leſs anxious to get out of it, and leſs apt to loſe their preſence

preſence of mind while they are in it. It is this habitual contempt of danger and death which ennobles the profeſſion of a ſoldier, and beſtows upon it, in the natural apprehenſions of mankind, a rank and dignity ſuperior to that of any other profeſſion. The ſkilful and ſucceſsful exerciſe of this profeſſion, in the ſervice of their country, ſeems to have conſtituted the moſt diſtinguiſhing feature in the character of the favourite heroes of all ages.

Great warlike exploit, though undertaken contrary to every principle of juſtice, and carried on without any regard to humanity, ſometimes intereſts us, and commands even ſome degree of a certain ſort of eſteem for the very worthleſs characters which conduct it. We are intereſted even in the exploits of the Buccaneers; and read with ſome ſort of eſteem and admiration, the hiſtory of the moſt worthleſs men, who, in purſuit of the moſt criminal purpoſes, endured greater hardſhips, ſurmounted greater difficulties, and encountered greater dangers, than, perhaps, any which the ordinary

dinary courſe of hiſtory gives an account of.

The command of anger appears upon many occaſions not leſs generous and noble than that of fear. The proper expreſſion of juſt indignation compoſes many of the moſt ſplendid and admired paſſages both of ancient and modern eloquence. The Philippics of Demoſthenes, the Catalinarians of Cicero, derive their whole beauty from the noble propriety with which this paſſion is expreſſed. But this juſt indignation is nothing but anger reſtrained and properly attempered to what the impartial ſpectator can enter into. The bluſtering and noiſy paſſion which goes beyond this, is always odious and offenſive, and intereſts us, not for the angry man, but for the man with whom he is angry. The nobleneſs of pardoning appears, upon many occaſions, ſuperior even to the moſt perfect propriety of reſenting. When either proper acknowledgments have been made by the offending party; or, even without any ſuch acknowledgments, when the public intereſt requires that the moſt mortal enemies

mies ſhould unite for the diſcharge of ſome important duty, the man who can caſt away all animoſity, and act with confidence and cordiality towards the perſon who had moſt grievouſly offended him, ſeems juſtly to merit our higheſt admiration.

The command of anger, however, does not always appear in ſuch ſplendid colours. Fear is contrary to anger, and is often the motive which reſtrains it; and in ſuch caſes the meanneſs of the motive takes away all the nobleneſs of the reſtraint. Anger prompts to attack, and the indulgence of it ſeems ſometimes to ſhew a ſort of courage and ſuperiority to fear. The indulgence of anger is ſometimes an object of vanity. That of fear never is. Vain and weak men, among their inferiors, or thoſe who dare not reſiſt them, often affect to be oſtentatiouſly paſſionate, and fancy that they ſhow, what is called, ſpirit in being ſo. A bully tells many ſtories of his own inſolence, which are not true, and imagines that he thereby renders himſelf, if not more amiable and reſpectable, at leaſt more formidable to his audience. Modern manners, which,

which, by favouring the practice of duelling, may be ſaid, in ſome caſes, to encourage private revenge, contribute, perhaps, a good deal to render, in modern times, the reſtraint of anger by fear ſtill more contemptible than it might otherwiſe appear to be. There is always ſomething dignified in the command of fear, whatever may be the motive upon which it is founded. It is not ſo with the command of anger. Unleſs it is founded altogether in the ſenſe of decency, of dignity, and propriety, it never is perfectly agreeable.

To act according to the dictates of prudence, of juſtice, and proper beneficence, ſeems to have no great merit where there is no temptation to do otherwiſe. But to act with cool deliberation in the midſt of the greateſt dangers and difficulties; to obſerve religiouſly the ſacred rules of juſtice in ſpite both of the greateſt intereſts which might tempt, and the greateſt injuries which might provoke us to violate them; never to ſuffer the benevolence of our temper to be damped or diſcouraged by the malignity

and ingratitude of the individuals towards whom it may have been exerciſed; is the character of the moſt exalted wiſdom and virtue. Self-command is not only itſelf a great virtue, but from it all the other virtues ſeem to derive their principal luſtre.

The command of fear, the command of anger, are always great and noble powers. When they are directed by juſtice and benevolence, they are not only great virtues, but increaſe the ſplendour of thoſe other virtues. They may, however, ſometimes be directed by very different motives; and in this caſe, though ſtill great and reſpectable, they may be exceſſively dangerous. The moſt intrepid valour may be employed in the cauſe of the greateſt injuſtice. Amidſt great provocations, apparent tranquillity and good humour may ſometimes conceal the moſt determined and cruel reſolution to revenge. The ſtrength of mind requiſite for ſuch diſſimulation, though always and neceſſarily contaminated by the baſeneſs of falſehood, has, however, been often much admired by many people of no contempti-

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ble judgment. The diſſimulation of Catharine of Medicis is often celebrated by the profound hiſtorian Davila; that of Lord Digby, afterwards Earl of Briſtol, by the grave and conſcientious Lord Clarendon; that of the firſt Aſhley Earl of Shafteſbury, by the judicious Mr. Locke. Even Cicero ſeems to conſider this deceitful character, not indeed as of the higheſt dignity, but as not unſuitable to a certain flexibility of manners, which, he thinks, may, notwithſtanding, be, upon the whole, both agreeable and reſpectable. He exemplifies it by the characters of Homer's Ulyſſes, of the Athenian Themiſtocles, of the Spartan Lyſander, and of the Roman Marcus Craſſus. This character of dark and deep diſſimulation occurs moſt commonly in times of great public diſorder; amidſt the violence of faction and civil war. When law has become in a great meaſure impotent, when the moſt perfect innocence cannot alone inſure ſafety, regard to ſelf-defence obliges the greater part of men to have recourſe to dexterity, to addreſs, and to apparent accommodation to whatever happens to be, at the moment,

the prevailing party. This falſe character, too, is frequently accompanied with the cooleſt and moſt determined courage. The proper exerciſe of it impoſes that courage, as death is commonly the certain conſequence of detection. It may be employed indifferently, either to exaſperate or to allay thoſe furious animoſities of adverſe factions which impoſe the neceſſity of aſſuming it; and though it may ſometimes be uſeful, it is at leaſt equally liable to be exceſſively pernicious.

The command of the leſs violent and turbulent paſſions ſeems much leſs liable to be abuſed to any pernicious purpoſe. Temperance, decency, modeſty, and moderation, are always amiable, and can ſeldom be directed to any bad end. It is from the unremitting ſteadineſs of thoſe gentler exertions of ſelf-command, that the amiable virtue of chaſtity, that the reſpectable virtues of induſtry and frugality, derive all that ſober luſtre which attends them. The conduct of all thoſe who are contented to walk in the humble paths of private and peaceable

able life, derives from the ſame principle the greater part of the beauty and grace which belong to it; a beauty and grace which, though much leſs dazzling, is not always leſs pleaſing than thoſe which accompany the more ſplendid actions of the hero, the ſtateſman, or the legiſlator.

After what has already been ſaid, in ſeveral different parts of this diſcourſe, concerning the nature of ſelf-command, I judge it unneceſſary to enter into any further detail concerning thoſe virtues. I ſhall only obſerve at preſent, that the point of propriety, the degree of any paſſion which the impartial ſpectator approves of, is differently ſituated in different paſſions. In ſome paſſions the exceſs is leſs diſagreeable than the defect; and in ſuch paſſions the point of propriety ſeems to ſtand high, or nearer to the exceſs than to the defect. In other paſſions, the defect is leſs diſagreeable than the exceſs; and in ſuch paſſions the point of propriety ſeems to ſtand low, or nearer to the defect than to the exceſs. The former are the paſſions which the ſpectator is

moſt, the latter, thoſe which he is leaſt diſpoſed to ſympathize with. The former, too, are the paſſions of which the immediate feeling or ſenſation is agreeable to the perſon principally concerned; the latter, thoſe of which it is diſagreeable. It may be laid down as a general rule, that the paſſions which the ſpectator is moſt diſpoſed to ſympathize with, and in which, upon that account, the point of propriety may be ſaid to ſtand high, are thoſe of which the immediate feeling or ſenſation is more or leſs agreeable to the perſon principally concerned: and that, on the contrary, the paſſions which the ſpectator is leaſt diſpoſed to ſympathize with, and in which, upon that account, the point of propriety may be ſaid to ſtand low, are thoſe of which the immediate feeling or ſenſation is more or leſs diſagreeable, or even painful, to the perſon principally concerned. This general rule, ſo far as I have been able to obſerve, admits not of a ſingle exception. A few examples will at once, both ſufficiently explain it and demonſtrate the truth of it.

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The diſpoſition to the affections which tend to unite men in ſociety, to humanity, kindneſs, natural affection, friendſhip, eſteem, may ſometimes be exceſſive. Even the exceſs of this diſpoſition, however, renders a man intereſting to every body. Though we blame it, we ſtill regard it with compaſſion, and even with kindneſs, and never with diſlike. We are more ſorry for it than angry at it. To the perſon himſelf, the indulgence even of ſuch exceſſive affections is, upon many occaſions, not only agreeable, but delicious. Upon ſome occaſions, indeed, eſpecially when directed, as is too often the caſe, towards unworthy objects, it expoſes him to much real and heartfelt diſtreſs. Even upon ſuch occaſions, however, a well-diſpoſed mind regards him with the moſt exquiſite pity, and feels the higheſt indignation againſt thoſe who affect to deſpiſe him for his weakneſs and imprudence. The defect of this diſpoſition, on the contrary, what is called hardneſs of heart, while it renders a man inſenſible to the feelings and diſtreſſes of other people, renders other

people equally inſenſible to his; and, by excluding him from the friendſhip of all the world, excludes him from the beſt and moſt comfortable of all ſocial enjoyments.

The diſpoſition to the affections which drive men from one another, and which tend, as it were, to break the bands of human ſociety; the diſpoſition to anger, hatred, envy, malice, revenge; is, on the contrary, much more apt to offend by its exceſs than by its defect. The exceſs renders a man wretched and miſerable in his own mind, and the object of hatred, and ſometimes even of horror, to other people. The defect is very ſeldom complained of. It may, however, be defective. The want of proper indignation is a moſt eſſential defect in the manly character, and, upon many occaſions, renders a man incapable of protecting either himſelf or his friends from inſult and injuſtice. Even that principle, in the exceſs and improper direction of which conſiſts the odious and deteſtable paſſion of envy, may be defective. Envy is that paſſion

paſſion which views with malignant diſlike the ſuperiority of thoſe who are really entitled to all the ſuperiority they poſſeſs. The man, however, who, in matters of conſequence, tamely ſuffers other people, who are entitled to no ſuch ſuperiority, to riſe above him or get before him, is juſtly condemned as mean-ſpirited. This weakneſs is commonly founded in indolence, ſometimes in good nature, in an averſion to oppoſition, to buſtle and ſolicitation, and ſometimes, too, in a ſort of ill-judged magnanimity, which fancies that it can always continue to deſpiſe the advantage which it then deſpiſes, and, therefore, ſo eaſily gives up. Such weakneſs, however, is commonly followed by much regret and repentance; and what had ſome appearance of magnanimity in the beginning frequently gives place to a moſt malignant envy in the end, and to a hatred of that ſuperiority, which thoſe who have once attained it, may often become really entitled to, by the very circumſtance of having attained it. In order to live comfortably in the world, it is, upon all occaſions, as neceſſary to defend our dignity

nity and rank, as it is to defend our life or our fortune.

Our ſenſibility to perſonal danger and diſtreſs, like that to perſonal provocation, is much more apt to offend by its exceſs than by its defect. No character is more contemptible than that of a coward; no character is more admired than that of the man who faces death with intrepidity, and maintains his tranquillity and preſence of mind amidſt the moſt dreadful dangers. We eſteem the man who ſupports pain and even torture with manhood and firmneſs; and we can have little regard for him who ſinks under them, and abandons himſelf to uſeleſs outcries and womaniſh lamentations. A fretful temper, which feels, with too much ſenſibility, every little croſs accident, renders a man miſerable in himſelf and offenſive to other people. A calm one, which does not allow its tranquillity to be diſturbed, either by the ſmall injuries, or by the little diſaſters incident to the uſual courſe of human affairs; but which, amidſt the natural and moral evils infeſting the world, lays its account

account and is contented to ſuffer a little from both, is a bleſſing to the man himſelf, and gives eaſe and ſecurity to all his companions.

Our ſenſibility, however, both to our own injuries and to our own misfortunes, though generally too ſtrong, may likewiſe be too weak. The man who feels little for his own misfortunes muſt always feel leſs for thoſe of other people, and be leſs diſpoſed to relieve them. The man who has little reſentment for the injuries which are done to himſelf, muſt always have leſs for thoſe which are done to other people, and be leſs diſpoſed either to protect or to avenge them. A ſtupid inſenſibility to the events of human life neceſſarily extinguiſhes all that keen and earneſt attention to the propriety of our own conduct, which conſtitutes the real eſſence of virtue. We can feel little anxiety about the propriety of our own actions, when we are indifferent about the events which may reſult from them. The man who feels the full diſtreſs of the calamity which has befallen him, who

who feels the whole baſeneſs of the injuſtice which has been done to him, but who feels ſtill more ſtrongly what the dignity of his own character requires; who does not abandon himſelf to the guidance of the undiſciplined paſſions which his ſituation might naturally inſpire; but who governs his whole behaviour and conduct according to thoſe reſtrained and corrected emotions which the great inmate, the great demi-god within the breaſt preſcribes and approves of; is alone the real man of virtue, the only real and proper object of love, reſpect, and admiration. Inſenbility and that noble firmneſs, that exalted ſelf-command, which is founded in the ſenſe of dignity and propriety, are ſo far from being altogether the ſame, that in proportion as the former takes place, the merit of the latter is, in many caſes, entirely taken away.

But though the total want of ſenſibility to perſonal injury, to perſonal danger and diſtreſs, would, in ſuch ſituations, take away the whole merit of ſelf-command, that ſenſibility,

ſibility, however, may very eaſily be too exquiſite, and it frequently is ſo. When the ſenſe of propriety, when the authority of the judge within the breaſt, can control this extreme ſenſibility, that authority muſt no doubt appear very noble and very great. But the exertion of it may be too fatiguing; it may have too much to do. The individual, by a great effort, may behave perfectly well. But the conteſt between the two principles, the warfare within the breaſt, may be too violent to be at all conſiſtent with internal tranquillity and happineſs. The wiſe man whom Nature has endowed with this too exquiſite ſenſibility, and whoſe too lively feelings have not been ſufficiently blunted and hardened by early education and proper exerciſe, will avoid, as much as duty and propriety will permit, the ſituations for which he is not perfectly fitted. The man whoſe feeble and delicate conſtitution renders him too ſenſible to pain, to hardſhip, and to every ſort of bodily diſtreſs, ſhould not wantonly embrace the profeſſion of a ſoldier. The man of too much

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ſenſibility to injury, ſhould not raſhly engage in the conteſts of faction. Though the ſenſe of propriety ſhould be ſtrong enough to command all thoſe ſenſibilities, the compoſure of the mind muſt always be diſturbed in the ſtruggle. In this diſorder the judgment cannot always maintain its ordinary acuteneſs and preciſion; and though he may always mean to act properly, he may often act raſhly and imprudently, and in a manner which he himſelf will, in the ſucceeding part of his life, be for ever aſhamed of. A certain intrepidity, a certain firmneſs of nerves and hardineſs of conſtitution, whether natural or acquired, are undoubtedly the beſt preparatives for all the great exertions of ſelf-command.

Though war and faction are certainly the beſt ſchools for forming every man to this hardineſs and firmneſs of temper, though they are the beſt remedies for curing him of the oppoſite weakneſſes, yet, if the day of trial ſhould happen to come before he has completely learned his leſſon,

leſſon, before the remedy has had time to produce its proper effect, the conſequences might not be agreeable.

Our ſenſibility to the pleaſures, to the amuſements and enjoyments of human life, may offend, in the ſame manner, either by its exceſs or by its defect. Of the two, however, the exceſs ſeems leſs diſagreeable than the defect. Both to the ſpectator and to the perſon principally concerned, a ſtrong propenſity to joy is certainly more pleaſing than a dull inſenſibility to the objects of amuſement and diverſion. We are charmed with the gaiety of youth, and even with the playfulneſs of childhood: but we ſoon grow weary of the flat and taſteleſs gravity which too frequently accompanies old age. When this propenſity, indeed, is not reſtrained by the ſenſe of propriety, when it is unſuitable to the time or to the place, to the age or to the ſituation of the perſon, when to indulge it, he neglects either his intereſt or his duty; it is juſtly blamed as exceſſive, and as hurt-

ful both to the individual and to the ſociety. In the greater part of ſuch caſes, however what is chiefly to be found fault with is, not ſo much the ſtrength of the propenſity to joy, as the weakneſs of the ſenſe of propriety and duty. A young man who has no reliſh for the diverſions and amuſements that are natural and ſuitable to his age, who talks of nothing but his book or his buſineſs, is diſliked as formal and pedantic; and we give him no credit for his abſtinence even from improper indulgencies, to which he ſeems to have ſo little inclination.

The principle of ſelf-eſtimation may be too high, and it may likewiſe be too low. It is ſo very agreeable to think highly, and ſo very diſagreeable to think meanly of ourſelves, that, to the perſon himſelf, it cannot well be doubted, but that ſome degree of exceſs muſt be much leſs diſagreeable than any degree of defect. But to the impartial ſpectator, it may perhaps be thought, things muſt appear quite differently, and that to him, the defect muſt always be leſs diſa-

greeable than the exceſs. And in our companions, no doubt, we much more frequently complain of the latter than of the former. When they aſſume upon us, or ſet themſelves before us, their ſelf-eſtimation mortifies our own. Our own pride and vanity prompt us to accuſe them of pride and vanity, and we ceaſe to be the impartial ſpectators of their conduct. When the ſame companions, however, ſuffer any other man to aſſume over them a ſuperiority which does not belong to him, we not only blame them, but often deſpiſe them as mean-ſpirited. When, on the contrary, among other people, they puſh themſelves a little more forward, and ſcramble to an elevation diſproportioned, as we think, to their merit, though we may not perfectly approve of their conduct, we are often, upon the whole, diverted with it; and, where there is no envy in the caſe, we are almoſt always much leſs diſpleaſed with them, than we ſhould have been, had they ſuffered themſelves to ſink below their proper ſtation.

In eſtimating our own merit, in judging of our own character and conduct, there are two different ſtandards to which we naturally compare them. The one is the idea of exact propriety and perfection, ſo far as we are each of us capable of comprehending that idea. The other is that degree of approximation to this idea which is commonly attained in the world, and which the greater part of our friends and companions, of our rivals and competitors, may have actually arrived at. We very ſeldom (I am diſpoſed to think, we never) attempt to judge of ourſelves without giving more or leſs attention to both theſe different ſtandards. But the attention of different men, and even of the ſame man at different times, is often very unequally divided between them; and is ſometimes principally directed towards the one, and ſometimes towards the other.

So far as our attention is directed towards the firſt ſtandard, the wiſeſt and beſt of us all, can, in his own character and con-

conduct, ſee nothing but weakneſs and imperfection; can diſcover no ground for arrogance and preſumption, but a great deal for humility, regret, and repentance. So far as our attention is directed towards the ſecond, we may be affected either in the one way or in the other, and feel ourſelves, either really above, or really below, the ſtandard to which we compare ourſelves.

The wiſe and virtuous man directs his principal attention to the firſt ſtandard; the idea of exact propriety and perfection. There exiſts in the mind of every man, an idea of this kind gradually formed from his obſervations upon the character and conduct both of himſelf and of other people. It is the ſlow, gradual, and progreſſive work of the great demigod within the breaſt, the great judge and arbiter of conduct. This idea is in every man more or leſs accurately drawn, its colouring is more or leſs juſt, its outlines are more or leſs exactly deſigned, according to the delicacy and acuteneſs of that ſenſibility, with which thoſe obſervations were made, and

according to the care and attention employed in making them. In the wife and virtuous man they have been made with the moſt acute and delicate ſenſibility, and the utmoſt care and attention have been employed in making them. Every day ſome feature is improved; every day ſome blemiſh is corrected. He has ſtudied this idea more than other people, he comprehends it more diſtinctly, he has formed a much more correct image of it, and is much more deeply enamoured of its exquiſite and divine beauty. He endeavours, as well as he can, to aſſimilate his own character to this archetype of perfection. But he imitates the work of a divine artiſt, which can never be equalled. He feels the imperfect ſucceſs of all his beſt endeavours, and ſees, with grief and affliction, in how many different features the mortal copy falls ſhort of the immortal original. He remembers, with concern and humiliation, how often, from want of attention, from want of judgment, from want of temper, he has, both in words and actions, both in conduct and converſation, violated the exact

rules

rules of perfect propriety; and has ſo far departed from that model, according to which he wiſhed to faſhion his own character and conduct. When he directs his attention towards the ſecond ſtandard, indeed, that degree of excellence which his friends and acquaintances have commonly arrived at, he may be ſenſible of his own ſuperiority. But, as his principal attention is always directed towards the firſt ſtandard, he is neceſſarily much more humbled by the one compariſon than he ever can be elevated by the other. He is never ſo elated as to look down with inſolence even upon thoſe who are really below him. He feels ſo well his own imperfection, he knows ſo well the difficulty with which he attained his own diſtant approximation to rectitude, that he cannot regard with contempt the ſtill greater imperfection of other people. Far from inſulting over their inferiority, he views it with the moſt indulgent commiſeration, and, by his advice as well as example, is at all times willing to promote their further advancement. If, in any particular qualification, they happen to be ſuperior to him

(for who is ſo perfect as not to have many ſuperiors in many different qualifications?), far from envying their ſuperiority, he, who knows how difficult it is to excel, eſteems and honours their excellence, and never fails to beſtow upon it the full meaſure of applauſe which it deſerves. His whole mind, in ſhort, is deeply impreſſed, his whole behaviour and deportment are diſtinctly ſtamped with the character of real modeſty; with that of a very moderate eſtimation of his own merit, and, at the ſame time, of a full ſenſe of the merit of other people.

In all the liberal and ingenious arts, in painting, in poetry, in muſic, in eloquence, in philoſophy, the great artiſt feels always the real imperfection of his own beſt works, and is more ſenſible than any man how much they fall ſhort of that ideal perfection of which he has formed ſome conception, which he imitates as well as he can, but which he deſpairs of ever equalling. It is the inferior artiſt only, who is ever perfectly ſatisfied with his own performances.

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He has little conception of this ideal perfection, about which he has little employed his thoughts; and it is chiefly to the works of other artiſts, of, perhaps, a ſtill lower order, that he deigns to compare his own works. Boileau, the great French poet (in ſome of his works, perhaps not inferior to the greateſt poet of the ſame kind, either ancient or modern), uſed to ſay that no great man was ever completely ſatisfied with his own works. His acquaintance Santeuil (a writer of Latin verſes, and who, on account of that ſchool-boy accompliſhment, had the weakneſs to fancy himſelf a poet) aſſured him that he himſelf was always completely ſatisfied with *his* own. Boileau replied, with, perhaps, an arch ambiguity, That he certainly was the only great man that ever was ſo. Boileau, in judging of his own works, compared them with the ſtandard of ideal perfection, which, in his own particular branch of the poetic art, he had, I preſume, meditated as deeply, and conceived as diſtinctly, as it is poſſible for man to conceive it. Santeuil, in judging of *his* own works,

compared them, I ſuppoſe, chiefly to thoſe of the other Latin poets of his own time, to the greater part of whom he was certainly very far from being inferior. But to ſupport and finiſh off, if I may ſay ſo, the conduct and converſation of a whole life to ſome reſemblance of this ideal perfection, is ſurely much more difficult than to work up to an equal reſemblance any of the productions of any of the ingenious arts. The artiſt ſits down to his work undiſturbed, at leiſure, in the full poſſeſſion and recollection of all his ſkill, experience, and knowledge. The wiſe man muſt ſupport the propriety of his own conduct in health and in ſickneſs, in ſucceſs and in diſappointment, in the hour of fatigue and drowſy indolence, as well as in that of the moſt awakened attention. The moſt ſudden and unexpected aſſaults of difficulty and diſtreſs muſt never ſurpriſe him. The injuſtice of other people muſt never provoke him to injuſtice. The violence of faction muſt never confound him. All the hardſhips and hazards of war muſt never either diſhearten or appal him.

Of the perſons who, in eſtimating their own merit, in judging of their own character and conduct, direct by far the greater part of their attention to the ſecond ſtandard, to that ordinary degree of excellence which is commonly attained by other people, there are ſome who really and juſtly feel themſelves very much above it, and who, by every intelligent and impartial ſpectator, are acknowledged to be ſo. The attention of ſuch perſons, however, being always principally directed, not to the ſtandard of ideal, but to that of ordinary perfection, they have little ſenſe of their own weakneſſes and imperfections; they have little modeſty; are often aſſuming, arrogant, and preſumptuous; great admirers of themſelves, and great contemners of other people. Though their characters are in general much leſs correct, and their merit much inferior to that of the man of real and modeſt virtue; yet their exceſſive preſumption, founded upon their own exceſſive ſelf-admiration, dazzles the multitude, and often impoſes even upon thoſe who are much ſuperior to the multitude. The frequent,

quent, and often wonderful, ſucceſs of the moſt ignorant quacks and impoſtors, both civil and religious, ſufficiently demonſtrate how eaſily the multitude are impoſed upon by the moſt extravagant and groundleſs pretenſions. But when thoſe pretenſions are ſupported by a very high degree of real and ſolid merit, when they are diſplayed with all the ſplendour which oſtentation can beſtow upon them, when they are ſupported by high rank and great power, when they have often been ſucceſsfully exerted, and are, upon that account, attended by the loud acclamations of the multitude; even the man of ſober judgment often abandons himſelf to the general admiration. The very noiſe of thoſe fooliſh acclamations often contributes to confound his underſtanding, and while he ſees thoſe great men only at a certain diſtance, he is often diſpoſed to worſhip them with a ſincere admiration, ſuperior even to that with which they appear to worſhip themſelves. When there is no envy in the caſe, we all take pleaſure in admiring, and are, upon that account, naturally diſpoſed, in our

own

own fancies, to render complete and perfect in every reſpect the characters which, in many reſpects, are ſo very worthy of admiration. The exceſſive ſelf-admiration of thoſe great men is well underſtood, perhaps, and even ſeen through, with ſome degree of deriſion, by thoſe wiſe men who are much in their familiarity, and who ſecretly ſmile at thoſe lofty pretenſions, which, by people at a diſtance, are often regarded with reverence, and almoſt with adoration. Such, however, have been, in all ages, the greater part of thoſe men who have procured to themſelves the moſt noiſy fame, the moſt extenſive reputation; a fame and reputation, too, which have often deſcended to the remoteſt poſterity.

Great ſucceſs in the world, great authority over the ſentiments and opinions of mankind, have very ſeldom been acquired without ſome degree of this exceſſive ſelf-admiration. The moſt ſplendid characters, the men who have performed the moſt illuſtrious actions, who have brought about the greateſt revolutions, both in the ſitu-

ations

ations and opinions of mankind; the moſt ſucceſsful warriors, the greateſt ſtateſmen and legiſlators, the eloquent founders and leaders of the moſt numerous and moſt ſucceſsful ſects and parties; have many of them been, not more diſtinguiſhed for their very great merit, than for a degree of preſumption and ſelf-admiration altogether diſproportioned even to that very great merit. This preſumption was, perhaps, neceſſary, not only to prompt them to undertakings which a more ſober mind would never have thought of, but to command the ſubmiſſion and obedience of their followers to ſupport them in ſuch undertakings. When crowned with ſucceſs, accordingly, this preſumption has often betrayed them into a vanity that approached almoſt to inſanity and folly. Alexander the Great appears, not only to have wiſhed that other people ſhould think him a God, but to have been at leaſt very well diſpoſed to fancy himſelf ſuch. Upon his death-bed, the moſt ungodlike of all ſituations, he requeſted of his friends that, to the reſpectable liſt of Deities, into which himſelf had long before been inſerted, his

his old mother Olympia might likewiſe have the honour of being added. Amidſt the reſpectful admiration of his followers and diſciples, amidſt the univerſal applauſe of the public, after the oracle, which probably had followed the voice of that applauſe, had pronounced him the wiſeſt of men, the great wiſdom of Socrates, though it did not ſuffer him to fancy himſelf a God, yet was not great enough to hinder him from fancying that he had ſecret and frequent intimations from ſome inviſible and divine Being. The ſound head of Cæſar was not ſo perfectly ſound as to hinder him from being much pleaſed with his divine genealogy from the goddeſs Venus; and, before the temple of this pretended great-grandmother, to receive, without riſing from his ſeat, the Roman Senate, when that illuſtrious body came to preſent him with ſome decrees conferring upon him the moſt extravagant honours. This inſolence, joined to ſome other acts of an almoſt childiſh vanity, little to be expected from an underſtanding at once ſo very acute and comprehenſive, ſeems, by exaſperating the

the public jealouſy, to have emboldened his aſſaſſins, and to have haſtened the execution of their conſpiracy. The religion and manners of modern times give our great men little encouragement to fancy themſelves either Gods or even Prophets. Succeſs, however, joined to great popular favour, has often ſo far turned the heads of the greateſt of them, as to make them aſcribe to themſelves both an importance and an ability much beyond what they really poſſeſſed; and, by this preſumption, to precipitate themſelves into many raſh and ſometimes ruinous adventures. It is a characteriſtic almoſt peculiar to the great Duke of Marlborough, that ten years of ſuch uninterrupted and ſuch ſplendid ſucceſs as ſcarce any other general could boaſt of, never betrayed him into a ſingle raſh action, ſcarce into a ſingle raſh word or expreſſion. The ſame temperate coolneſs and ſelf-command cannot, I think, be aſcribed to any other great warrior of later times; not to Prince Eugene, not to the late King of Pruſſia, not to the great Prince of Conde, not even to Guſtavus Adolphus. Turenne

ſeems

ſeems to have approached the neareſt to it; but ſeveral different tranſactions of his life ſufficiently demonſtrate that it was in him by no means ſo perfect as in the great Duke of Marlborough.

In the humble projects of private life, as well as in the ambitious and proud purſuits of high ſtations, great abilities and ſucceſsful enterpriſe, in the beginning, have frequently encouraged to undertakings which neceſſarily led to bankruptcy and ruin in the end.

The eſteem and admiration which every impartial ſpectator conceives for the real merit of thoſe ſpirited, magnanimous, and high-minded perſons, as it is a juſt and well-founded ſentiment, ſo it is a ſteady and permanent one, and altogether independent of their good or bad fortune. It is otherwiſe with that admiration which he is apt to conceive for their exceſſive ſelf-eſtimation and preſumption. While they are ſucceſsful, indeed, he is often perfectly conquered and overborne by them. Succeſs covers

covers from his eyes, not only the great imprudence, but frequently the great injuſtice of their enterpriſes; and, far from blaming this defective part of their character, he often views it with the moſt enthuſiaſtic admiration. When they are unfortunate, however, things change their colours and their names. What was before heroic magnanimity, reſumes its proper appellation of extravagant raſhneſs and folly; and the blackneſs of that avidity and injuſtice, which was before hid under the ſplendour of proſperity, comes full into view, and blots the whole luſtre of their enterpriſe. Had Cæſar, inſtead of gaining, loſt the battle of Pharſalia, his character would, at this hour, have ranked a little above that of Catiline, and the weakeſt man would have viewed his enterpriſe againſt the laws of his country in blacker colours, than, perhaps, even Cato, with all the animoſity of a party-man, ever viewed it at the time. His real merit, the juſtneſs of his taſte, the ſimplicity and elegance of his writings, the propriety of his eloquence, his ſkill in war, his reſources in diſtreſs, his cool and ſedate judgment

judgment in danger, his faithful attachment to his friends, his unexampled generoſity to his enemies, would all have been acknowledged; as the real merit of Catiline, who had many great qualities, is acknowledged at this day. But the inſolence and injuſtice of his all-graſping ambition would have darkened and extinguiſhed the glory of all that real merit. Fortune has in this, as well as in ſome other reſpects already mentioned, great influence over the moral ſentiments of mankind, and, according as ſhe is either favourable or adverſe, can render the ſame character the object, either of general love and admiration, or of univerſal hatred and contempt. This great diſorder in our moral ſentiments is by no means, however, without its utility; and we may on this, as well as on many other occaſions, admire the wiſdom of God even in the weakneſs and folly of man. Our admiration of ſucceſs is founded upon the ſame principle with our reſpect for wealth and greatneſs, and is equally neceſſary for eſtabliſhing the diſtinction of ranks and the order of ſociety. By this admiration of ſucceſs we are taught

to ſubmit more eaſily to thoſe ſuperiors, whom the courſe of human affairs may aſſign to us; to regard with reverence, and ſometimes even with a ſort of reſpectful affection, that fortunate violence which we are no longer capable of reſiſting; not only the violence of ſuch ſplendid characters as thoſe of a Cæſar or an Alexander, but often that of the moſt brutal and ſavage barbarians, of an Attila, a Gengis, or a Tamerlane. To all ſuch mighty conquerors the great mob of mankind are naturally diſpoſed to look up with a wondering, though, no doubt, with a very weak and fooliſh admiration. By this admiration, however, they are taught to acquieſce with leſs reluctance under that government which an irreſiſtible force impoſes upon them, and from which no reluctance could deliver them.

Though in proſperity, however, the man of exceſſive ſelf-eſtimation may ſometimes appear to have ſome advantage over the man of correct and modeſt virtue; though the applauſe of the multitude, and of thoſe who ſee them both only at a diſtance, is often much

much louder in favour of the one than it ever is in favour of the other; yet, all things fairly computed, the real balance of advantage is, perhaps in all caſes, greatly in favour of the latter and againſt the former. The man who neither aſcribes to himſelf, nor wiſhes that other people ſhould aſcribe to him, any other merit beſides that which really belongs to him, fears no humiliation, dreads no detection; but reſts contented and ſecure upon the genuine truth and ſolidity of his own character. His admirers may neither be very numerous nor very loud in their applauſes; but the wiſeſt man who ſees him the neareſt and who knows him the beſt, admires him the moſt. To a real wiſe man the judicious and well-weighed approbation of a ſingle wiſe man, gives more heartfelt ſatisfaction than all the noiſy applauſes of ten thouſand ignorant though enthuſiaſtic admirers. He may ſay with Parmenides, who upon reading a philoſophical diſcourſe before a public aſſembly at Athens, and obſerving, that, except Plato, the whole company had left him, continued, notwithſtand-

ing, to read on, and ſaid that Plato alone was audience ſufficient for him.

It is otherwiſe with the man of exceſſive ſelf-eſtimation. The wiſe men who ſee him the neareſt, admire him the leaſt. Amidſt the intoxication of proſperity, their ſober and juſt eſteem falls ſo far ſhort of the extravagance of his own ſelf-admiration, that he regards it as mere malignity and envy. He ſuſpects his beſt friends. Their company becomes offenſive to him. He drives them from his preſence, and often rewards their ſervices not only with ingratitude, but with cruelty and injuſtice. He abandons his confidence to flatterers and traitors, who pretend to idolize his vanity and preſumption; and that character which in the beginning, though in ſome reſpects defective, was, upon the whole, both amiable and reſpectable, becomes contemptible and odious in the end. Amidſt the intoxication of proſperity, Alexander killed Clytus, for having preferred the exploits of his father Philip to his own; put Caliſthenes to death in torture, for having refuſed to adore him

him in the Perſian manner; and murdered the great friend of his father, the venerable Parmenio, after having, upon the moſt groundleſs ſuſpicions, ſent firſt to the torture and afterwards to the ſcaffold the only remaining ſon of that old man, the reſt having all before died in his own ſervice. This was that Parmenio of whom Philip uſed to ſay, that the Athenians were very fortunate who could find ten generals every year, while he himſelf, in the whole courſe of his life, could never find one but Parmenio. It was upon the vigilance and attention of this Parmenio that he repoſed at all times with confidence and ſecurity, and, in his hours of mirth and jollity, uſed to ſay, Let us drink, my friends, we may do it with ſafety, for Parmenio never drinks. It was this ſame Parmenio, with whoſe preſence and counſel, it had been ſaid, Alexander had gained all his victories; and without whoſe preſence and counſel he had never gained a ſingle victory. The humble, admiring, and flattering friends, whom Alexander left in power and authority behind him, divided his empire among themſelves,

and after having thus robbed his family and kindred of their inheritance, put, one after another, every ſingle ſurviving individual of them, whether male or female, to death.

We frequently, not only pardon, but thoroughly enter into and ſympathize with the exceſſive ſelf-eſtimation of thoſe ſplendid characters in which we obſerve a great and diſtinguiſhed ſuperiority above the common level of mankind. We call them ſpirited, magnanimous, and high-minded; words which all involve in their meaning a conſiderable degree of praiſe and admiration. But we cannot enter into and ſympathize with the exceſſive ſelf-eſtimation of thoſe characters in which we can diſcern no ſuch diſtinguiſhed ſuperiority. We are diſguſted and revolted by it; and it is with ſome difficulty that we can either pardon or ſuffer it. We call it pride or vanity; two words, of which the latter always, and the former for the moſt part, involve in their meaning a conſiderable degree of blame.

Thoſe

Thoſe two vices, however, though reſembling, in ſome reſpects, as being both modifications of exceſſive ſelf-eſtimation, are yet, in many reſpects, very different from one another.

The proud man is ſincere, and, in the bottom of his heart, is convinced of his own ſuperiority; though it may ſometimes be difficult to gueſs upon what that conviction is founded. He wiſhes you to view him in no other light than that in which, when he places himſelf in your ſituation, he really views himſelf. He demands no more of you than what he thinks juſtice. If you appear not to reſpect him as he reſpects himſelf, he is more offended than mortified, and feels the ſame indignant reſentment as if he had ſuffered a real injury. He does not even then, however, deign to explain the grounds of his own pretenſions. He diſdains to court your eſteem. He affects even to deſpiſe it, and endeavours to maintain his aſſumed ſtation, not ſo much by making you ſenſible of his ſuperiority, as of your own meanneſs. He ſeems to wiſh,

not ſo much to excite your eſteem for *himſelf*, as to mortify *that* for *yourſelf*.

The vain man is not ſincere, and, in the bottom of his heart, is very ſeldom convinced of that ſuperiority which he wiſhes you to aſcribe to him. He wiſhes you to view him in much more ſplendid colours than thoſe in which, when he places himſelf in your ſituation, and ſuppoſes you to know all that he knows, he can really view himſelf. When you appear to view him, therefore, in different colours, perhaps in his proper colours, he is much more mortified than offended. The grounds of his claim to that character which he wiſhes you to aſcribe to him, he takes every opportunity of diſplaying, both by the moſt oſtentatious and unneceſſary exhibition of the good qualities and accompliſhments which he poſſeſſes in ſome tolerable degree, and ſometimes even by falſe pretenſions to thoſe which he either poſſeſſes in no degree, or in ſo very ſlender a degree that he may well enough be ſaid to poſſeſs them in no degree. Far from deſpiſing your eſteem, he courts it with the moſt anxious aſſiduity. Far from wiſhing to mortify your

ſelf-

ſelf-eſtimation, he is happy to cheriſh it, in hopes that in return you will cheriſh his own. He flatters in order to be flattered. He ſtudies to pleaſe, and endeavours to bribe you into a good opinion of him by politeneſs and complaiſance, and ſometimes even by real and eſſential good offices, though often diſplayed, perhaps, with unneceſſary oſtentation.

The vain man ſees the reſpect which is paid to rank and fortune, and wiſhes to uſurp this reſpect, as well as that for talents and virtues. His dreſs, his equipage, his way of living, accordingly, all announce both a higher rank and a greater fortune than really belong to him; and in order to ſupport this fooliſh impoſition for a few years in the beginning of his life, he often reduces himſelf to poverty and diſtreſs long before the end of it. As long as he can continue his expence, however, his vanity is delighted with viewing himſelf, not in the light in which you would view him if you knew all that he knows; but in that in which, he imagines, he has, by his own addreſs, induced you actually to view him.

Of all the illuſions of vanity this is, perhaps, the moſt common. Obſcure ſtrangers who viſit foreign countries, or who, from a remote province, come to viſit, for a ſhort time, the capital of their own country, moſt frequently attempt to practiſe it. The folly of the attempt, though always very great and moſt unworthy of a man of ſenſe, may not be altogether ſo great upon ſuch as upon moſt other occaſions. If their ſtay is ſhort, they may eſcape any diſgraceful detection; and, after indulging their vanity for a few months or a few years, they may return to their own homes, and repair, by future parſimony, the waſte of their paſt profuſion.

The proud man can very ſeldom be accuſed of this folly. His ſenſe of his own dignity renders him careful to preſerve his independency, and, when his fortune happens not to be large, though he wiſhes to be decent, he ſtudies to be frugal and attentive in all his expences. The oſtentatious expence of the vain man is highly offenſive to him. It outſhines, perhaps, his own. It provokes his indignation as an inſolent aſ-

ſumption.

ſumption of a rank which is by no means due; and he never talks of it without loading it with the harſheſt and ſevereſt reproaches.

The proud man does not always feel himſelf at his eaſe in the company of his equals, and ſtill leſs in that of his ſuperiors. He cannot lay down his lofty pretenſions, and the countenance and converſation of ſuch company overawe him ſo much that he dare not diſplay them. He has recourſe to humbler company, for which he has little reſpect, which he would not willingly chuſe, and which is by no means agreeable to him; that of his inferiors, his flatterers, and dependants. He ſeldom viſits his ſuperiors, or, if he does, it is rather to ſhow that he is entitled to live in ſuch company, than for any real ſatisfaction that he enjoys in it. It is as Lord Clarendon ſays of the Earl of Arundel, that he ſometimes went to court, becauſe he could there only find a greater man than himſelf; but that he went very ſeldom, becauſe he found there a greater man than himſelf.

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It is quite otherwiſe with the vain man. He courts the company of his ſuperiors as much as the proud man ſhuns it. Their ſplendour, he ſeems to think, reflects a ſplendour upon thoſe who are much about them. He haunts the courts of kings and the levees of miniſters, and gives himſelf the air of being a candidate for fortune and preferment, when in reality he poſſeſſes the much more precious happineſs, if he knew how to enjoy it, of not being one. He is fond of being admitted to the tables of the great, and ſtill more fond of magnifying to other people the familiarity with which he is honoured there. He aſſociates himſelf, as much as he can, with faſhionable people, with thoſe who are ſuppoſed to direct the public opinion, with the witty, with the learned, with the popular; and he ſhuns the company of his beſt friends whenever the very uncertain current of public favour happens to run in any reſpect againſt them. With the people to whom he wiſhes to recommend himſelf, he is not always very delicate about the means which he employs for that purpoſe; unneceſſary

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oſtentation, groundleſs pretenſions, conſtant aſſentation, frequently flattery, though for the moſt part a pleaſant and a ſprightly flattery, and very ſeldom the groſs and fulſome flattery of a paraſite. The proud man, on the contrary, never flatters, and is frequently ſcarce civil to any body.

Notwithſtanding all its groundleſs pretenſions, however, vanity is almoſt always a ſprightly and a gay, and very often a good-natured paſſion. Pride is always a grave, a ſullen, and a ſevere one. Even the falſehoods of the vain man are all innocent falſehoods, meant to raiſe himſelf, not to lower other people. To do the proud man juſtice, he very ſeldom ſtoops to the baſeneſs of falſehood. When he does, however, his falſehoods are by no means ſo innocent. They are all miſchievous, and meant to lower other people. He is full of indignation at the unjuſt ſuperiority, as he thinks it, which is given to them. He views them with malignity and envy, and, in talking of them, often endeavours, as much as he can, to extenuate

tenuate and leſſen whatever are the grounds upon which their ſuperiority is ſuppoſed to be founded. Whatever tales are circulated to their diſadvantage, though he ſeldom forges them himſelf, yet he often takes pleaſure in believing them, is by no means unwilling to repeat them, and even ſometimes with ſome degree of exaggeration. The worſt falſehoods of vanity are all what we call white lies: thoſe of pride, whenever it condeſcends to falſehood, are all of the oppoſite complexion.

Our diſlike to pride and vanity generally diſpoſes us to rank the perſons whom we accuſe of thoſe vices rather below than above the common level. In this judgment, however, I think, we are moſt frequently in the wrong, and that both the proud and the vain man are often (perhaps for the moſt part) a good deal above it; though not near ſo much as either the one really thinks himſelf, or as the other wiſhes you to think him. If we compare them with their own pretenſions, they may appear the juſt objects of contempt. But when we com-

compare them with what the greater part of their rivals and competitors really are, they may appear quite otherwiſe, and very much above the common level. Where there is this real ſuperiority, pride is frequently attended with many reſpectable virtues; with truth, with integrity, with a high ſenſe of honour, with cordial and ſteady friendſhip, with the moſt inflexible firmneſs and reſolution. Vanity, with many amiable ones; with humanity, with politeneſs, with a deſire to oblige in all little matters, and ſometimes with a real generoſity in great ones; a generoſity, however, which it often wiſhes to diſplay in the moſt ſplendid colours that it can. By their rivals and enemies, the French, in the laſt century, were accuſed of vanity; the Spaniards, of pride; and foreign nations were diſpoſed to conſider the one as the more amiable; the other, as the more reſpectable people.

The words *vain* and *vanity* are never taken in a good ſenſe. We ſometimes ſay of a man, when we are talking of him in

in good-humour, that he is the better for his vanity, or that his vanity is more diverting than offenſive; but we ſtill conſider it as a foible and a ridicule in his character.

The words *proud* and *pride*, on the contrary, are ſometimes taken in a good ſenſe. We frequently ſay of a man, that he is too proud, or that he has too much noble pride, ever to ſuffer himſelf to do a mean thing. Pride is, in this caſe, confounded with magnanimity. Ariſtotle, a philoſopher who certainly knew the world, in drawing the character of the magnanimous man, paints him with many features which, in the two laſt centuries, were commonly aſcribed to the Spaniſh character: that he was deliberate in all his reſolutions; ſlow, and even tardy, in all his actions; that his voice was grave, his ſpeech deliberate, his ſtep and motion ſlow; that he appeared indolent and even ſlothful, not at all diſpoſed to buſtle about little matters, but to act with the moſt determined and vigorous reſolution upon all great and illuſtrious occaſions; that he was not

not a lover of danger, or forward to expoſe himſelf to little dangers, but to great dangers; and that, when he expoſed himſelf to danger, he was altogether regardleſs of his life.

The proud man is commonly too well contented with himſelf to think that his character requires any amendment. The man who feels himſelf all-perfect, naturally enough deſpiſes all further improvement. His ſelf-ſufficiency and abſurd conceit of his own ſuperiority, commonly attend him from his youth to his moſt advanced age; and he dies, as Hamlet ſays, with all his ſins upon his head, unanointed, unanealed.

It is frequently quite otherwiſe with the vain man. The deſire of the eſteem and admiration of other people, when for qualities and talents which are the natural and proper objects of eſteem and admiration, is the real love of true glory; a paſſion which, if not the very beſt paſſion of human nature, is certainly one of the beſt.

Vanity is very frequently no more than an attempt prematurely to uſurp that glory before it is due. Though your ſon, under five-and-twenty years of age, ſhould be but a coxcomb; do not, upon that account, deſpair of his becoming, before he is forty, a very wiſe and worthy man, and a real proficient in all thoſe talents and virtues to which, at preſent, he may only be an oſtentatious and empty pretender. The great ſecret of education is to direct vanity to proper objects. Never ſuffer him to value himſelf upon trivial accompliſhments. But do not always diſcourage his pretenſions to thoſe that are of real importance. He would not pretend to them if he did not earneſtly deſire to poſſeſs them. Encourage this deſire; afford him every means to facilitate the acquiſition; and do not take too much offence, although he ſhould ſometimes aſſume the air of having attained it a little before the time.

Such, I ſay, are the diſtinguiſhing characteriſtics of pride and vanity, when each of them acts according to its proper character.

ter. But the proud man is often vain; and the vain man is often proud. Nothing can be more natural than that the man, who thinks much more highly of himſelf than he deſerves, ſhould wiſh that other people ſhould think ſtill more highly of him: or that the man, who wiſhes that other people ſhould think more highly of him than he thinks of himſelf, ſhould, at the ſame time, think much more highly of himſelf than he deſerves. Thoſe two vices being frequently blended in the ſame character, the characteriſtics of both are neceſſarily confounded; and we ſometimes find the ſuperficial and impertinent oſtentation of vanity joined to the moſt malignant and deriſive inſolence of pride. We are ſometimes, upon that account, at a loſs how to rank a particular character, or whether to place it among the proud or among the vain.

Men of merit conſiderably above the common level, ſometimes under-rate as well as over-rate themſelves. Such characters, though not very dignified, are often, in private ſociety, far from being diſagree-

able. His companions all feel themſelves much at their eaſe in the ſociety of a man ſo perfectly modeſt and unaſſuming. If thoſe companions, however, have not both more diſcernment and more generoſity than ordinary, though they may have ſome kindneſs for him, they have ſeldom much reſpect; and the warmth of their kindneſs is very ſeldom ſufficient to compenſate the coldneſs of their reſpect. Men of no more than ordinary diſcernment never rate any perſon higher than he appears to rate himſelf. He ſeems doubtful himſelf, they ſay, whether he is perfectly fit for ſuch a ſituation or ſuch an office; and immediately give the preference to ſome impudent blockhead who entertains no doubt about his own qualifications. Though they ſhould have diſcernment, yet, if they want generoſity, they never fail to take advantage of his ſimplicity, and to aſſume over him an impertinent ſuperiority which they are by no means entitled to. His good-nature may enable him to bear this for ſome time; but he grows weary at laſt, and frequently when it is too late, and when

when that rank, which he ought to have aſſumed, is loſt irrecoverably, and uſurped, in conſequence of his own backwardneſs, by ſome of his more forward, though much leſs meritorious companions. A man of this character muſt have been very fortunate in the early choice of his companions, if, in going through the world, he meets always with fair juſtice, even from thoſe whom, from his own paſt kindneſs, he might have ſome reaſon to conſider as his beſt friends; and a youth, too unaſſuming and too unambitious, is frequently followed by an inſignificant, complaining, and diſcontented old age.

Thoſe unfortunate perſons whom nature has formed a good deal below the common level, ſeem ſometimes to rate themſelves ſtill more below it than they really are. This humility appears ſometimes to ſink them into idiotiſm. Whoever has taken the trouble to examine idiots with attention, will find that, in many of them, the faculties of the underſtanding are by no means weaker than in ſeveral other people, who,

though acknowledged to be dull and ſtupid, are not, by any body, accounted idiots. Many idiots, with no more than ordinary education, have been taught to read, write, and account tolerably well. Many perſons, never accounted idiots, notwithſtanding the moſt careful education, and notwithſtanding that, in their advanced age, they have had ſpirit enough to attempt to learn what their early education had not taught them, have never been able to acquire, in any tolerable degree, any one of thoſe three accompliſhments. By an inſtinct of pride, however, they ſet themſelves upon a level with their equals in age and ſituation; and, with courage and firmneſs, maintain their proper ſtation among their companions. By an oppoſite inſtinct, the idiot feels himſelf below every company into which you can introduce him. Ill-uſage, to which he is extremely liable, is capable of throwing him into the moſt violent fits of rage and fury. But no good uſage, no kindneſs or indulgence, can ever raiſe him to converſe with you as your equal. If you can bring him to converſe with you at all, however,

ever, you will frequently find his anſwers ſufficiently pertinent, and even ſenſible. But they are always ſtamped with a diſtinct conſciouſneſs of his own great inferiority. He ſeems to ſhrink and, as it were, to retire from your look and converſation; and to feel, when he places himſelf in your ſituation, that, notwithſtanding your apparent condeſcenſion, you cannot help conſidering him as immenſely below you. Some idiots, perhaps the greater part, ſeem to be ſo, chiefly or altogether, from a certain numbneſs or torpidity in the faculties of the underſtanding. But there are others, in whom thoſe faculties do not appear more torpid or benumbed than in many other people who are not accounted idiots. But that inſtinct of pride, neceſſary to ſupport them upon an equality with their brethren, ſeems totally wanting in the former and not in the latter.

That degree of ſelf-eſtimation, therefore, which contributes moſt to the happineſs and contentment of the perſon himſelf, ſeems likewiſe moſt agreeable to the impar-

tial ſpectator. The man who eſteems himſelf as he ought, and no more than he ought, ſeldom fails to obtain from other people all the eſteem that he himſelf thinks due. He deſires no more than is due to him, and he reſts upon it with complete ſatisfaction.

The proud and the vain man, on the contrary, are conſtantly diſſatisfied. The one is tormented with indignation at the unjuſt ſuperiority, as he thinks it, of other people. The other is in continual dread of the ſhame which, he foreſees, would attend upon the detection of his groundleſs pretenſions. Even the extravagant pretenſions of the man of real magnanimity, though, when ſupported by ſplendid abilities and virtues, and, above all, by good fortune, they impoſe upon the multitude, whoſe applauſes he little regards, do not impoſe upon thoſe wiſe men whoſe approbation he can only value, and whoſe eſteem he is moſt anxious to acquire. He feels that they ſee through, and ſuſpects that they deſpiſe his exceſſive preſumption; and he often ſuffers the cruel misfortune of becoming,

ing, firſt the jealous and ſecret, and at laſt the open, furious, and vindictive enemy of thoſe very perſons, whoſe friendſhip it would have given him the greateſt happineſs to enjoy with unſuſpicious ſecurity.

Though our diſlike to the proud and the vain often diſpoſes us to rank them rather below than above their proper ſtation, yet, unleſs we are provoked by ſome particular and perſonal impertinence, we very ſeldom venture to uſe them ill. In common caſes, we endeavour for our own eaſe, rather to acquieſce, and, as well as we can, to accommodate ourſelves to their folly. But, to the man who under-rates himſelf, unleſs we have both more diſcernment and more generoſity than belong to the greater part of men, we ſeldom fail, to do, at leaſt, all the injuſtice which he does to himſelf, and frequently a great deal more. He is not only more unhappy in his own feelings than either the proud or the vain, but he is much more liable to every ſort of ill-uſage from other people. In almoſt all caſes, it is better to be a little too proud, than, in any reſpect,

too

too humble; and, in the ſentiment of ſelf-eſtimation, ſome degree of exceſs ſeems, both to the perſon himſelf and to the impartial ſpectator, to be leſs diſagreeable than any degree of defect.

In this, therefore, as well as in every other emotion, paſſion and habit, the degree that is moſt agreeable to the impartial ſpectator is likewiſe moſt agreeable to the perſon himſelf; and according as either the exceſs or the defect is leaſt offenſive to the former, ſo, either the one or the other is in proportion leaſt diſagreeable to the latter.

CONCLUSION *of the* SIXTH PART.

CONCERN for our own happineſs recommends to us the virtue of prudence: concern for that of other people, the virtues of juſtice and beneficence; of which, the one reſtrains us from hurting, the other prompts us to promote that happineſs. Independent of any regard either to what are, or to what ought to be, or to what upon a certain condition would be, the ſentiments of other people, the firſt of thoſe three virtues is originally recommended to us by our ſelfiſh, the other two by our benevolent affections. Regard to the ſentiments of other people, however, comes afterwards both to enforce and to direct the practice of all thoſe virtues; and no man during, either the whole courſe of his life, or that of any conſiderable part of it, ever trod ſteadily and uniformly in the paths of prudence, of juſtice, or of proper beneficence, whoſe conduct

duct was not principally directed by a regard to the ſentiments of the ſuppoſed impartial ſpectator, of the great inmate of the breaſt, the great judge and arbiter of conduct. If in the courſe of the day we have ſwerved in any reſpect from the rules which he preſcribes to us; if we have either exceeded or relaxed in our frugality; if we have either exceeded or relaxed in our induſtry; if, through paſſion or inadvertency, we have hurt in any reſpect the intereſt or happineſs of our neighbour; if we have neglected a plain and proper opportunity of promoting that intereſt and happineſs; it is this inmate who, in the evening, calls us to an account for all thoſe omiſſions and violations, and his reproaches often make us bluſh inwardly both for our folly and inattention to our own happineſs, and for our ſtill greater indifference and inattention, perhaps, to that of other people.

But though the virtues of prudence, juſtice, and beneficenee, may, upon different occaſions, be recommended to us almoſt equally by two different principles; thoſe of ſelf-command are, upon moſt occaſions, principally

principally and almoſt entirely recommended to us by one; by the ſenſe of propriety, by regard to the ſentiments of the ſuppoſed impartial ſpectator. Without the reſtraint which this principle impoſes, every paſſion would, upon moſt occaſions, ruſh headlong, if I may ſay ſo, to its own gratification. Anger would follow the ſuggeſtions of its own fury; fear thoſe of its own violent agitations. Regard to no time or place would induce vanity to refrain from the loudeſt and moſt impertinent oſtentation; or voluptuouſneſs from the moſt open, indecent, and ſcandalous indulgence. Reſpect for what are, or for what ought to be, or for what upon a certain condition would be, the ſentiments of other people, is the ſole principle which, upon moſt occaſions, overawes all thoſe mutinous and turbulent paſſions into that tone and temper which the impartial ſpectator can enter into and ſympathize with.

Upon ſome occaſions, indeed, thoſe paſſions are reſtrained, not ſo much by a ſenſe of their impropriety, as by prudential con-

ſiderations of the bad conſequences which might follow from their indulgence. In ſuch caſes, the paſſions, though reſtrained, are not always ſubdued, but often remain lurking in the breaſt with all their original fury. The man whoſe anger is reſtrained by fear, does not always lay aſide his anger, but only reſerves its gratification for a more ſafe opportunity. But the man who, in relating to ſome other perſon the injury which has been done to him, feels at once the fury of his paſſion cooled and becalmed by ſympathy with the more moderate ſentiments of his companion, who at once adopts thoſe more moderate ſentiments, and comes to view that injury, not in the black and atrocious colours in which he had originally beheld it, but in the much milder and fairer light in which his companion naturally views it; not only reſtrains, but in ſome meaſure ſubdues, his anger. The paſſion becomes really leſs than it was before, and leſs capable of exciting him to the violent and bloody revenge which at firſt, perhaps, he might have thought of inflicting.

Thoſe

Thoſe paſſions which are reſtrained by the ſenſe of propriety, are all in ſome degree moderated and ſubdued by it. But thoſe which are reſtrained only by prudential conſiderations of any kind, are, on the contrary, frequently inflamed by the reſtraint, and ſometimes (long after the provocation given, and when nobody is thinking about it) burſt out abſurdly and unexpectedly, and with tenfold fury and violence.

Anger, however, as well as every other paſſion, may, upon many occaſions, be very properly reſtrained by prudential conſiderations. Some exertion of manhood and ſelf-command is even neceſſary for this ſort of reſtraint; and the impartial ſpectator may ſometimes view it with that ſort of cold eſteem due to that ſpecies of conduct which he conſiders as a mere matter of vulgar prudence; but never with that affectionate admiration with which he ſurveys the ſame paſſions, when, by the ſenſe of propriety, they are moderated and ſubdued to what he himſelf can readily enter into.

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In the former ſpecies of reſtraint, he may frequently diſcern ſome degree of propriety, and, if you will, even of virtue; but it is a propriety and virtue of a much inferior order to thoſe which he always feels with tranſport and admiration in the latter.

The virtues of prudence, juſtice, and beneficence, have no tendency to produce any but the moſt agreeable effects. Regard to thoſe effects, as it originally recommends them to the actor, ſo does it afterwards to the impartial ſpectator. In our approbation of the character of the prudent man, we feel, with peculiar complacency, the ſecurity which he muſt enjoy while he walks under the ſafeguard of that ſedate and deliberate virtue. In our approbation of the character of the juſt man, we feel, with equal complacency, the ſecurity which all thoſe connected with him, whether in neighbourhood, ſociety, or buſineſs, muſt derive from his ſcrupulous anxiety never either to hurt or offend. In our approbation of the character of the beneficent man, we enter into the gratitude of all thoſe who are within

within the ſphere of his good offices, and conceive with them the higheſt ſenſe of his merit. In our approbation of all thoſe virtues, our ſenſe of their agreeable effects, of their utility, either to the perſon who exerciſes them, or to ſome other perſons, joins with our ſenſe of their propriety, and conſtitutes always a conſiderable, frequently the greater, part of that approbation.

But in our approbation of the virtues of ſelf-command, complacency with their effects ſometimes conſtitutes no part, and frequently but a ſmall part, of that approbation. Thoſe effects may ſometimes be agreeable, and ſometimes diſagreeable; and though our approbation is no doubt ſtronger in the former caſe, it is by no means altogether deſtroyed in the latter. The moſt heroic valour may be employed indifferently in the cauſe either of juſtice or of injuſtice; and though it is no doubt much more loved and admired in the former caſe, it ſtill appears a great and reſpectable quality even in the latter. In that, and in all the other virtues of ſelf-command, the ſplendid and dazzling

quality ſeems always to be the greatneſs and ſteadineſs of the exertion, and the ſtrong ſenſe of propriety which is neceſſary in order to make and to maintain that exertion. The effects are too often but too little regarded.

THE

THEORY

OF

MORAL SENTIMENTS.

PART VII.

Of Syſtems of MORAL PHILOSOPHY.

Conſiſting of Four Sections.

SECTION I.

Of the Queſtions which ought to be examined in a Theory of Moral Sentiments.

IF we examine the moſt celebrated and remarkable of the different theories which have been given concerning the nature and origin of our moral ſentiments,

we ſhall find that almoſt all of them coincide with ſome part or other of that which I have been endeavouring to give an account of; and that if every thing which has already been ſaid be fully conſidered, we ſhall be at no loſs to explain what was the view or aſpect of nature which led each particular author to form his particular ſyſtem. From ſome one or other of thoſe principles which I have been endeavouring to unfold, every ſyſtem of morality that ever had any reputation in the world has, perhaps, ultimately been derived. As they are all of them, in this reſpect, founded upon natural principles, they are all of them in ſome meaſure in the right. But as many of them are derived from a partial and imperfect view of nature, there are many of them too in ſome reſpects in the wrong.

In treating of the principles of morals there are two queſtions to be conſidered. Firſt, wherein does virtue conſiſt? Or what is the tone of temper, and tenour of conduct, which conſtitutes the excellent and

and praiſe-worthy character, the character which is the natural object of eſteem, honour, and approbation? And, ſecondly, by what power or faculty in the mind is it, that this character, whatever it be, is recommended to us? Or in other words, how and by what means does it come to paſs, that the mind prefers one tenour of conduct to another, denominates the one right and the other wrong; conſiders the one as the object of approbation, honour, and reward, and the other of blame, cenſure, and puniſhment?

We examine the firſt queſtion when we conſider whether virtue conſiſts in benevolence, as Dr. Hutcheſon imagines; or in acting ſuitably to the different relations we ſtand in, as Dr. Clarke ſuppoſes; or in the wiſe and prudent purſuit of our own real and ſolid happineſs, as has been the opinion of others.

We examine the ſecond queſtion, when we conſider, whether the virtuous character, whatever it conſiſts in, be recommend-

ed to us by ſelf-love, which makes us perceive that this character, both in ourſelves and others, tends moſt to promote our own private intereſt; or by reaſon, which points out to us the difference between one character and another, in the ſame manner as it does that between truth and falſehood; or by a peculiar power of perception, called a moral ſenſe, which this virtuous character gratifies and pleaſes, as the contrary diſguſts and diſpleaſes it; or laſt of all, by ſome other principle in human nature, ſuch as a modification of ſympathy, or the like.

I ſhall begin with conſidering the ſyſtems which have been formed concerning the firſt of theſe queſtions, and ſhall proceed afterwards to examine thoſe concerning the ſecond.

SECTION II.

Of the different Accounts which have been given of the Nature of Virtue.

INTRODUCTION.

THE different accounts which have been given of the nature of virtue, or of the temper of mind which conſtitutes the excellent and praiſe-worthy character, may be reduced to three different claſſes. According to ſome, the virtuous temper of mind does not conſiſt in any one ſpecies of affections, but in the proper government and direction of all our affections, which may be either virtuous or vicious according to the objects which they purſue, and the degree of vehemence with which they purſue them. According to theſe authors, therefore, virtue conſiſts in propriety.

According to others, virtue conſiſts in the judicious purſuit of our own private intereſt and happineſs, or in the proper government and direction of thoſe ſelfiſh affections which aim ſolely at this end. In the opinion of theſe authors, therefore, virtue conſiſts in prudence.

Another ſet of authors make virtue conſiſt in thoſe affections only which aim at the happineſs of others, not in thoſe which aim at our own. According to them, therefore, diſintereſted benevolence is the only motive which can ſtamp upon any action the character of virtue.

The character of virtue, it is evident, muſt either be aſcribed indifferently to all our affections, when under proper government and direction; or it muſt be confined to ſome one claſs or diviſion of them. The great diviſion of our affections is into the ſelfiſh and the benevolent. If the character of virtue, therefore, cannot be aſcribed indifferently to all our affections, when under proper government and direction, it muſt be

be confined either to thoſe which aim directly at our own private happineſs, or to thoſe which aim directly at that of others. If virtue, therefore, does not conſiſt in propriety, it muſt conſiſt either in prudence or in benevolence. Beſides theſe three, it is ſcarce poſſible to imagine that any other account can be given of the nature of virtue. I ſhall endeavour to ſhow hereafter how all the other accounts, which are ſeemingly different from any of theſe, coincide at bottom with ſome one or other of them.

CHAP. I.

Of thoſe Syſtems which make Virtue conſiſt in Propriety.

ACCORDING to Plato, to Ariſtotle, and to Zeno, virtue conſiſts in the propriety of conduct, or in the ſuitableneſs of the affection from which we act to the object which excites it.

I. In the ſyſtem of Plato* the ſoul is conſidered as ſomething like a little ſtate or republic, compoſed of three different faculties or orders.

The firſt is the judging faculty, the faculty which determines not only what are the proper means for attaining any end, but alſo what ends are fit to be purſued, and what degree of relative value we ought to put upon each. This faculty Plato called,

* See Plato de Rep. lib iv.

as

as it is very properly called, reaſon, and conſidered it as what had a right to be the governing principle of the whole. Under this appellation, it is evident, he comprehended not only that faculty by which we judge of truth and falſehood, but that by which we judge of the propriety or impropriety of deſires and affections.

The different paſſions and appetites, the natural ſubjects of this ruling principle, but which are ſo apt to rebel againſt their maſter, he reduced to two different claſſes or orders. The firſt conſiſted of thoſe paſſions, which are founded in pride and reſentment, or in what the ſchoolmen call the iraſcible part of the ſoul; ambition, animoſity, the love of honour and the dread of ſhame, the deſire of victory, ſuperiority, and revenge; all thoſe paſſions, in ſhort, which are ſuppoſed either to riſe from, or to denote what, by a metaphor in our language, we commonly call ſpirit or natural fire. The ſecond conſiſted of thoſe paſſions which are founded in the love of pleaſure, or in what the ſchoolmen called the concupiſcible part of

of the ſoul. It comprehended all the appetites of the body, the love of eaſe and ſecurity, and of all ſenſual gratifications.

It rarely happens that we break in upon that plan of conduct, which the governing principle preſcribes, and which in all our cool hours we had laid down to ourſelves as what was moſt proper for us to purſue, but when prompted by one or other of thoſe two different ſets of paſſions; either by ungovernable ambition and reſentment, or by the importunate ſolicitations of preſent eaſe and pleaſure. But though theſe two orders of paſſions are ſo apt to miſlead us, they are ſtill conſidered as neceſſary parts of human nature: the firſt having been given to defend us againſt injuries, to aſſert our rank and dignity in the world, to make us aim at what is noble and honourable, and to make us diſtinguiſh thoſe who act in the ſame manner; the ſecond, to provide for the ſupport and neceſſities of the body.

In the ſtrength, acuteneſs, and perfection of the governing principle was placed the eſſen-

eſſential virtue of prudence, which, according to Plato, conſiſted in a juſt and clear diſcernment, founded upon general and ſcientific ideas, of the ends which were proper to be purſued, and of the means which were proper for attaining them.

When the firſt ſet of paſſions, thoſe of the iraſcible part of the ſoul, had that degree of ſtrength and firmneſs which enabled them, under the direction of reaſon, to deſpiſe all dangers in the purſuit of what was honourable and noble; it conſtituted the virtue of fortitude and magnanimity. This order of paſſions, according to this ſyſtem, was of a more generous and noble nature than the other. They were conſidered upon many occaſions as the auxiliaries of reaſon, to check and reſtrain the inferior and brutal appetites. We are often angry at ourſelves, it was obſerved, we often become the objects of our own reſentment and indignation, when the love of pleaſure prompts to do what we diſapprove of; and the iraſcible part of our nature is in this manner

manner called in to aſſiſt the rational againſt the concupiſcible.

When all thoſe three different parts of our nature were in perfect concord with one another, when neither the iraſcible nor concupiſcible paſſions ever aimed at any gratification which reaſon did not approve of, and when reaſon never commanded any thing, but what theſe of their own accord were willing to perform: this happy compoſure, this perfect and complete harmony of ſoul, conſtituted that virtue which in their language is expreſſed by a word which we commonly tranſlate temperance, but which might more properly be tranſlated good temper, or ſobriety and moderation of mind.

Juſtice, the laſt and greateſt of the four cardinal virtues, took place according to this ſyſtem, when each of thoſe three faculties of the mind confined itſelf to its proper office, without attempting to encroach upon that of any other; when reaſon directed

and paſſion obeyed, and when each paſſion performed its proper duty, and exerted itſelf towards its proper object eaſily and without reluctance, and with that degree of force and energy, which was ſuitable to the value of what it purſued. In this conſiſted that complete virtue, that perfect propriety of conduct, which Plato, after ſome of the ancient Pythagoreans, denominated Juſtice.

The word, it is to be obſerved, which expreſſes juſtice in the Greek language, has ſeveral different meanings; and as the correſpondent word in all other languages, ſo far as I know, has the ſame, there muſt be ſome natural affinity among thoſe various ſignifications. In one ſenſe we are ſaid to do juſtice to our neighbour when we abſtain from doing him any poſitive harm, and do not directly hurt him, either in his perſon, or in his eſtate, or in his reputation. This is that juſtice which I have treated of above, the obſervance of which may be extorted by force, and the violation of which expoſes to puniſhment. In another ſenſe we are ſaid not

not to do juſtice to our neighbour unleſs we conceive for him all that love, reſpect, and eſteem, which his character, his ſituation, and his connexion with ourſelves, render ſuitable and proper for us to feel, and unleſs we act accordingly. It is in this ſenſe that we are ſaid to do injuſtice to a man of merit who is connected with us, though we abſtain from hurting him in every reſpect, if we do not exert ourſelves to ſerve him, and to place him in that ſituation in which the impartial ſpectator would be pleaſed to ſee him. The firſt ſenſe of the word coincides with what Ariſtotle and the Schoolmen call commutative juſtice, and with what Grotius calls the *juſtitia expletrix*, which conſiſts in abſtaining from what is another's, and in doing voluntarily whatever we can with propriety be forced to do. The ſecond ſenſe of the word coincides with what ſome have called diſtributive juſtice*, and with the *juſtitia attri-*

* The diſtributive juſtice of Ariſtotle is ſomewhat different. It conſiſts in the proper diſtribution of rewards from the public ſtock of a community. See Ariſtotle Ethic. Nic. l. 5. c. 2.

butrix

butrix of Grotius, which conſiſts in proper beneficence, in the becoming uſe of what is our own, and in the applying it to thoſe purpoſes either of charity or generoſity, to which it is moſt ſuitable, in our ſituation, that it ſhould be applied. In this ſenſe juſtice comprehends all the ſocial virtues. There is yet another ſenſe in which the word juſtice is ſometimes taken, ſtill more extenſive than either of the former, though very much a-kin to the laſt; and which runs too, ſo far as I know, through all languages. It is in this laſt ſenſe that we are ſaid to be unjuſt, when we do not ſeem to value any particular object with that degree of eſteem, or to purſue it with that degree of ardour which to the impartial ſpectator it may appear to deſerve or to be naturally fitted for exciting. Thus we are ſaid to do injuſtice to a poem or a picture, when we do not admire them enough, and we are ſaid to do them more than juſtice when we admire them too much. In the ſame manner we are ſaid to do injuſtice to ourſelves when we appear not to give ſufficient attention to any particular object of

ſelf-intereſt. In this laſt ſenſe, what is called juſtice means the ſame thing with exact and perfect propriety of conduct and behaviour, and comprehends in it, not only the offices of both commutative and diſtributive juſtice, but of every other virtue, of prudence, of fortitude, of temperance. It is in this laſt ſenſe that Plato evidently underſtands what he calls juſtice, and which, therefore, according to him, comprehends in it the perfection of every ſort of virtue.

Such is the account given by Plato of the nature of virtue, or of that temper of mind which is the proper object of praiſe and approbation. It conſiſts, according to him, in that ſtate of mind in which every faculty confines itſelf within its proper ſphere without encroaching upon that of any other, and performs its proper office with that preciſe degree of ſtrength and vigour which belongs to it. His account, it is evident, coincides in every reſpect with what we have ſaid above concerning the propriety of conduct.

II. Vir-

II. Virtue, according to Ariſtotle*, conſiſts in the habit of mediocrity according to right reaſon. Every particular virtue, according to him, lies in a kind of middle between two oppoſite vices, of which the one offends from being too much, the other from being too little affected by a particular ſpecies of objects. Thus the virtue of fortitude or courage lies in the middle between the oppoſite vices of cowardice and of preſumptuous raſhneſs, of which the one offends from being too much, and the other from being too little affected by the objects of fear. Thus too the virtue of frugality lies in a middle between avarice and profuſion, of which the one conſiſts in an exceſs, the other in a defect of the proper attention to the objects of ſelf-intereſt. Magnanimity, in the ſame manner, lies in a middle between the exceſs of arrogance and the defect of puſillanimity, of which the one conſiſts in too extravagant, the other in too weak a ſentiment of our own worth and dignity. It is unneceſſary to obſerve that this account of virtue

* See Ariſtotle, Ethic. Nic. l. 2. c. 5. et ſeq. et l. 3. c. 5. et ſeq.

correſponds too pretty exactly with what has been ſaid above concerning the propriety and impropriety of conduct.

According to Ariſtotle*, indeed, virtue did not ſo much conſiſt in thoſe moderate and right affections, as in the habit of this moderation. In order to underſtand this, it is to be obſerved, that virtue may be conſidered either as the quality of an action, or as the quality of a perſon. Conſidered as the quality of an action, it conſiſts, even according to Ariſtotle, in the reaſonable moderation of the affection from which the action proceeds, whether this diſpoſition be habitual to the perſon or not. Conſidered as the quality of a perſon, it conſiſts, in the habit of this reaſonable moderation, in its having become the cuſtomary and uſual diſpoſition of the mind. Thus the action which proceeds from an occaſional fit of generoſity is undoubtedly a generous action, but the man who performs it, is not neceſſarily a generous perſon, becauſe it may be

* See Ariſtotle, Ethic. Nic. lib. ii. ch. 1, 2, 3, and 4.

the

the ſingle action of the kind which he ever performed. The motive and diſpoſition of heart, from which this action was performed, may have been quite juſt and proper: but as this happy mood ſeems to have been the effect rather of accidental humour than of any thing ſteady or permanent in the character, it can reflect no great honour on the performer. When we denominate a character generous or charitable, or virtuous in any reſpect, we mean to ſignify that the diſpoſition expreſſed by each of thoſe appellations is the uſual and cuſtomary diſpoſition of the perſon. But ſingle actions of any kind, how proper and ſuitable ſoever, are of little conſequence to ſhow that this is the caſe. If a ſingle action was ſufficient to ſtamp the character of any virtue upon the perſon who performed it, the moſt worthleſs of mankind might lay claim to all the virtues; ſince there is no man who has not, upon ſome occaſions, acted with prudence, juſtice, temperance, and fortitude. But though ſingle actions, how laudable ſoever, reflect very little praiſe upon the perſon who performs them,

a ſingle vicious action performed by one whoſe conduct is uſually very regular, greatly diminiſhes and ſometimes deſtroys altogether our opinion of his virtue. A ſingle action of this kind ſufficiently ſhows that his habits are not perfect, and that he is leſs to be depended upon, than, from the uſual train of his behaviour, we might have been apt to imagine.

Ariſtotle too*, when he made virtue to conſiſt in practical habits, had it probably in his view to oppoſe the doctrine of Plato, who ſeems to have been of opinion that juſt ſentiments and reaſonable judgments concerning what was fit to be done or to be avoided, were alone ſufficient to conſtitute the moſt perfect virtue. Virtue, according to Plato, might be conſidered as a ſpecies of ſcience, and no man, he thought, could ſee clearly and demonſtratively what was right and what was wrong, and not act accordingly. Paſſion might make us act contrary to doubtful and uncertain opinions, not to plain and evident judgments. Ari-

* See Ariſtotle, Mag. Mor. lib. i. ch. i.

ſtotle,

ſtotle, on the contrary, was of opinion, that no conviction of the underſtanding was capable of getting the better of inveterate habits, and that good morals aroſe not from knowledge but from action.

III. According to Zeno*, the founder of the Stoical doctrine, every animal was by nature recommended to its own care, and was endowed with the principle of ſelf-love, that it might endeavour to preſerve, not only its exiſtence, but all the different parts of its nature, in the beſt and moſt perfect ſtate of which they were capable.

The ſelf-love of man embraced, if I may ſay ſo, his body and all its different members, his mind and all its different faculties and powers, and deſired the preſervation and maintenance of them all in their beſt and moſt perfect condition. Whatever tended to ſupport this ſtate of exiſtence was, therefore, by nature pointed out to him as fit to be choſen; and whatever tended to deſtroy it, as fit to be rejected. Thus

* See Cicero de finibus, lib. iii.; alſo Diogenes Laertius in Zenone, lib. vii. ſegment 84.

health, ſtrength, agility and eaſe of body as well as the external conveniencies which could promote theſe; wealth, power, honours, the reſpect and eſteem of thoſe we live with; were naturally pointed out to us as things eligible, and of which the poſſeſſion was preferable to the want. On the other hand, ſickneſs, infirmity, unweildineſs, pain of body as well as all the external inconveniences which tend to occaſion or bring on any of them; poverty, the want of authority, the contempt or hatred of thoſe we live with; were, in the ſame manner, pointed out to us as things to be ſhunned and avoided. In each of thoſe two oppoſite claſſes of objects, there were ſome which appeared to be more the objects either of choice or rejection, than others in the ſame claſs. Thus, in the firſt claſs, health appeared evidently preferable to ſtrength, and ſtrength to agility; reputation to power, and power to riches. And thus too, in the ſecond claſs, ſickneſs was more to be avoided than unweildineſs of body, ignominy than poverty, and poverty than the loſs of power. Virtue and the propriety of conduct con-

ſifted in chooſing and rejecting all different objects and circumſtances according as they were by nature rendered more or leſs the objects of choice or rejection; in ſelecting always from among the ſeveral objects of choice preſented to us, that which was moſt to be choſen, when we could not obtain them all; and in ſelecting too, out of the ſeveral objects of rejection offered to us, that which was leaſt to be avoided, when it was not in our power to avoid them all. By chooſing and rejecting with this juſt and accurate diſcernment, by thus beſtowing upon every object the preciſe degree of attention it deſerved, according to the place which it held in this natural ſcale of things, we maintained, according to the Stoics, that perfect rectitude of conduct which conſtituted the eſſence of virtue. This was what they called to live conſiſtently, to live according to nature, and to obey thoſe laws and directions which nature, or the Author of nature, had preſcribed for our conduct.

So far the Stoical idea of propriety and virtue is not very different from that of Ariſtotle and the ancient Peripatetics.

Among

Among thoſe primary objects which nature had recommended to us as eligible, was the proſperity of our family, of our relations, of our friends, of our country, of mankind, and of the univerſe in general. Nature, too, had taught us, that as the proſperity of two was preferable to that of one, that of many, or of all, muſt be infinitely more ſo. That we ourſelves were but one, and that conſequently wherever our proſperity was inconſiſtent with that, either of the whole, or of any conſiderable part of the whole, it ought, even in our own choice, to yield to what was ſo vaſtly preferable. As all the events in this world were conducted by the providence of a wiſe, powerful, and good God, we might be aſſured that whatever happened tended to the proſperity and perfection of the whole. If we ourſelves, therefore, were in poverty, in ſickneſs, or in any other calamity, we ought, firſt of all, to uſe our utmoſt endeavours, ſo far as juſtice and our duty to others would allow, to reſcue ourſelves from this diſagreeable circumſtance. But if, after all we could do, we found this impoſſible, we ought to reſt ſatisfied that the order and perfection of

of the univerſe required that we ſhould in the mean time continue in this ſituation. And as the proſperity of the whole ſhould, even to us, appear preferable to ſo inſignificant a part as ourſelves, our ſituation, whatever it was, ought from that moment to become the object of our liking, if we would maintain that complete propriety and rectitude of ſentiment and conduct in which conſiſted the perfection of our nature. If, indeed, any opportunity of extricating ourſelves ſhould offer, it became our duty to embrace it. The order of the univerſe, it was evident, no longer required our continuance in this ſituation, and the great Director of the world plainly called upon us to leave it, by ſo clearly pointing out the road which we were to follow. It was the ſame caſe with the adverſity of our relations, our friends, our country. If, without violating any more ſacred obligation, it was in our power to prevent or put an end to their calamity, it undoubtedly was our duty to do ſo. The propriety of action, the rule which Jupiter had given us for the direction of our conduct, evidently required this of us. But if it was altogether out of our

our power to do either, we ought then to conſider this event as the moſt fortunate which could poſſibly have happened; becauſe we might be aſſured that it tended moſt to the proſperity and order of the whole, which was what we ourſelves, if we were wiſe and equitable, ought moſt of all to deſire. It was our own final intereſt conſidered as a part of that whole, of which the proſperity ought to be, not only the principal, but the ſole object of our deſire.

" In what ſenſe," ſays Epictetus, " are " ſome things ſaid to be according to our " nature, and others contrary to it? It is " in that ſenſe in which we conſider our- " ſelves as ſeparated and detached from all " other things. For thus it may be ſaid " to be according to the nature of the foot " to be always clean. But if you conſider " it as a foot, and not as ſomething de- " tached from the reſt of the body, it muſt " behove it ſometimes to trample in the " dirt, and ſometimes to tread upon thorns, " and ſometimes, too, to be cut off for " the ſake of the whole body; and if it re-

" fuſes

" fuſes this, it is no longer a foot. Thus, " too, ought we to conceive with regard " to ourſelves. What are you? A man. " If you conſider yourſelf as ſomething " ſeparated and detached, it is agreeable to " your nature to live to old age, to be rich, " to be in health. But if you conſider your- " ſelf as a man, and as a part of a whole, up- " on account of that whole, it will behove " you ſometimes to be in ſickneſs, ſometimes " to be expoſed to the inconveniency of a " ſea voyage, ſometimes to be in want; and " at laſt, perhaps, to die before your time. " Why then do you complain? Do not " you know that by doing ſo, as the foot " ceaſes to be a foot, ſo you ceaſe to be a " man?"

A wiſe man never complains of the deſtiny of Providence, nor thinks the univerſe in confuſion when he is out of order. He does not look upon himſelf as a whole, ſeparated and detached from every other part of nature, to be taken care of by itſelf and for itſelf. He regards himſelf in the light in which he imagines the great genius of

of human nature, and of the world, regards him. He enters, if I may ſay ſo, into the ſentiments of that divine Being, and conſiders himſelf as an atom, a particle, of an immenſe and infinite ſyſtem, which muſt and ought to be diſpoſed of, according to the conveniency of the whole. Aſſured of the wiſdom which directs all the events of human life, whatever lot befalls him, he accepts it with joy, ſatisfied that, if he had known all the connections and dependencies of the different parts of the univerſe, it is the very lot which he himſelf would have wiſhed for. If it is life, he is contented to live; and if it is death, as nature muſt have no further occaſion for his preſence here, he willingly goes where he is appointed. I accept, ſaid a cynical philoſopher, whoſe doctrines were in this reſpect the ſame as thoſe of the Stoics, I accept, with equal joy and ſatisfaction, whatever fortune can befall me. Riches or poverty, pleaſure or pain, health or ſickneſs, all is alike: nor would I deſire that the Gods ſhould in any reſpect change my deſtination. If I was to aſk of them any thing beyond what

what their bounty has already beſtowed, it ſhould be that they would inform me before-hand what it was their pleaſure ſhould be done with me, that I might of my own accord place myſelf in this ſituation, and demonſtrate the cheerfulneſs with which I embraced their allotment. If I am going to ſail, ſays Epictetus, I chuſe the beſt ſhip and the beſt pilot, and I wait for the faireſt weather that my circumſtances and duty will allow. Prudence and propriety, the principles which the Gods have given me for the direction of my conduct, require this of me; but they require no more: and if, notwithſtanding, a ſtorm ariſes, which neither the ſtrength of the veſſel nor the ſkill of the pilot are likely to withſtand, I give myſelf no trouble about the conſequence. All that I had to do is done already. The directors of my conduct never command me to be miſerable, to be anxious, deſponding, or afraid. Whether we are to be drowned, or to come to a harbour, is the buſineſs of Jupiter, not mine. I leave it entirely to his determination, nor ever break my reſt with conſidering which way he is likely to decide

decide it, but receive whatever comes with equal indifference and ſecurity.

From this perfect confidence in that benevolent wiſdom which governs the univerſe, and from this entire reſignation to whatever order that wiſdom might think proper to eſtabliſh, it neceſſarily followed, that, to the Stoical wiſe man, all the events of human life muſt be in a great meaſure indifferent. His happineſs conſiſted altogether, firſt, in the contemplation of the happineſs and perfection of the great ſyſtem of the univerſe, of the good government of the great republic of Gods and men, of all rational and ſenſible beings; and, ſecondly, in diſcharging his duty, in acting properly in the affairs of this great republic whatever little part that wiſdom had aſſigned to him. The propriety or impropriety of his endeavours might be of great conſequence to him. Their ſucceſs or diſappointment could be of none at all; could excite no paſſionate joy or ſorrow, no paſſionate deſire or averſion. If he preferred ſome events to others, if ſome ſituations were the objects of his choice and others

others of his rejection, it was not becauſe he regarded the one as in themſelves in any reſpect better than the other, or thought that his own happineſs would be more complete in what is called the fortunate than in what is regarded as the diſtreſsful ſituation; but becauſe the propriety of action, the rule which the Gods had given him for the direction of his conduct, required him to chuſe and reject in this manner. All his affections were abſorbed and ſwallowed up in two great affections; in that for the diſcharge of his own duty, and in that for the greateſt poſſible happineſs of all rational and ſenſible beings. For the gratification of this latter affection, he reſted with the moſt perfect ſecurity upon the wiſdom and power of the great Superintendant of the univerſe. His ſole anxiety was about the gratification of the former; not about the event, but about the propriety of his own endeavours. Whatever the event might be, he truſted to a ſuperior power and wiſdom for turning it to promote that great end which

he himſelf was moſt deſirous of promoting.

This propriety of chooſing and rejecting, though originally pointed out to us, and as it were recommended and introduced to our acquaintance by the things, and for the ſake of the things choſen and rejected; yet when we had once become thoroughly acquainted with it, the order, the grace, the beauty which we diſcerned in this conduct, the happineſs which we felt reſulted from it, neceſſarily appeared to us of much greater value than the actual obtaining of all the different objects of choice, or the actual avoiding of all thoſe of rejection. From the obſervation of this propriety aroſe the happineſs and the glory; from the neglect of it, the miſery and the diſgrace of human nature.

But to a wiſe man, to one whoſe paſſions were brought under perfect ſubjection to the ruling principles of his nature, the exact obſervation of this propriety was equally eaſy upon all occaſions. Was he in pro-

proſperity, he returned thanks to Jupiter for having joined him with circumſtances which were eaſily maſtered, and in which there was little temptation to do wrong. Was he in adverſity, he equally returned thanks to the director of this ſpectacle of human life, for having oppoſed to him a vigorous athlete, over whom, though the conteſt was likely to be more violent, the victory was more glorious, and equally certain. Can there be any ſhame in that diſtreſs which is brought upon us without any fault of our own, and in which we behave with perfect propriety? There can, therefore, be no evil, but, on the contrary, the greateſt good and advantage. A brave man exults in thoſe dangers in which, from no raſhneſs of his own, his fortune has involved him. They afford an opportunity of exerciſing that heroic intrepidity, whoſe exertion gives the exalted delight which flows from the conſciouſneſs of ſuperior propriety and deſerved admiration. One who is maſter of all his exerciſes has no averſion to meaſure his ſtrength and activity with the ſtrongeſt. And, in the ſame man-

ner, one who is maſter of all his paſſions, does not dread any circumſtance in which the Superintendant of the univerſe may think proper to place him. The bounty of that divine Being has provided him with virtues which render him ſuperior to every ſituation. If it is pleaſure, he has temperance to refrain from it; if it is pain, he has conſtancy to bear it; if it is danger or death, he has magnanimity and fortitude to deſpiſe it. The events of human life can never find him unprepared, or at a loſs how to maintain that propriety of ſentiment and conduct which, in his own apprehenſion, conſtitutes at once his glory and his happineſs.

Human life the Stoics appear to have conſidered as a game of great ſkill; in which, however, there was a mixture of chance, or of what is vulgarly underſtood to be chance. In ſuch games the ſtake is commonly a trifle, and the whole pleaſure of the game ariſes from playing well, from playing fairly, and playing ſkilfully. If notwithſtanding all his ſkill, however, the

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good player ſhould, by the influence of chance, happen to loſe, the loſs ought to be a matter, rather of merriment, than of ſerious ſorrow. He has made no falſe ſtroke; he has done nothing which he ought to be aſhamed of; he has enjoyed completely the whole pleaſure of the game. If, on the contrary, the bad player, notwithſtanding all his blunders, ſhould, in the ſame manner, happen to win, his ſucceſs can give him but little ſatisfaction. He is mortified by the remembrance of all the faults which he committed. Even during the play he can enjoy no part of the pleaſure which it is capable of affording. From ignorance of the rules of the game, fear and doubt and heſitation are the diſagreeable ſentiments that precede almoſt every ſtroke which he plays; and when he has played it, the mortification of finding it a groſs blunder, commonly completes the unpleaſing circle of his ſenſations. Human life, with all the advantages which can poſſibly attend it, ought, according to the Stoics, to be regarded but as a mere twopenny ſtake; a matter by far too inſig-

nificant to merit any anxious concern. Our only anxious concern ought to be, not about the ſtake, but about the proper method of playing. If we placed our happineſs in winning the ſtake, we placed it in what depended upon cauſes beyond our power, and out of our direction. We neceſſarily expoſed ourſelves to perpetual fear and uneaſineſs, and frequently to grievous and mortifying diſappointments. If we placed it in playing well, in playing fairly, in playing wiſely and ſkilfully; in the propriety of our own conduct in ſhort; we placed it in what, by proper diſcipline, education, and attention, might be altogether in our own power, and under our own direction. Our happineſs was perfectly ſecure, and beyond the reach of fortune. The event of our actions, if it was out of our power, was equally out of our concern, and we could never feel either fear or anxiety about it; nor ever ſuffer any grievous, or even any ſerious diſappointment.

Human life itſelf, as well as every different advantage or diſadvantage which can attend

attend it, might, they ſaid, according to different circumſtances, be the proper object either of our choice or of our rejection. If, in our actual ſituation, there were more circumſtances agreeable to nature than contrary to it; more circumſtances which were the objects of choice than of rejection; life, in this caſe, was, upon the whole, the proper object of choice, and the propriety of conduct required that we ſhould remain in it. If, on the other hand, there were, in our actual ſituation, without any probable hope of amendment, more circumſtances contrary to nature than agreeable to it; more circumſtances which were the objects of rejection than of choice; life itſelf, in this caſe, became, to a wiſe man, the object of rejection, and he was not only at liberty to remove out of it, but the propriety of conduct, the rule which the Gods had given him for the direction of his conduct, required him to do ſo. I am ordered, ſays Epictetus, not to dwell at Nicopolis. I do not dwell there. I am ordered not to dwell at Athens. I do not dwell at Athens. I am ordered not to dwell in Rome. I do

not dwell in Rome. I am ordered to dwell in the little and rocky iſland of Gyaræ. I go and dwell there. But the houſe ſmokes in Gyaræ. If the ſmoke is moderate I will bear it, and ſtay there. If it is exceſſive, I will go to a houſe from whence no tyrant can remove me. I keep in mind always that the door is open, that I can walk out when I pleaſe, and retire to that hoſpitable houſe which is at all times open to all the world; for beyond my undermoſt garment, beyond my body, no man living has any power over me. If your ſituation is upon the whole diſagreeable; if your houſe ſmokes too much for you, ſaid the Stoics, walk forth by all means. But walk forth without repining; without murmuring or complaining. Walk forth calm, contented, rejoicing, returning thanks to the Gods, who, from their infinite bounty, have opened the ſafe and quiet harbour of death, at all times ready to receive us from the ſtormy ocean of human life; who have prepared this ſacred, this inviolable, this great aſylum, always open, always acceſſible; altogether beyond

the reach of human rage and injuſtice; and large enough to contain both all thoſe who wiſh, and all thoſe who do not wiſh to retire to it: an aſylum which takes away from every man every pretence of complaining, or even of fancying that there can be any evil in human life, except ſuch as he may ſuffer from his own folly and weakneſs.

The Stoics, in the few fragments of their philoſophy which have come down to us, ſometimes talk of leaving life with a gaiety, and even with a levity, which, were we to conſider thoſe paſſages by themſelves, might induce us to believe that they imagined we could with propriety leave it whenever we had a mind, wantonly and capriciouſly, upon the ſlighteſt diſguſt or uneaſineſs. "When you ſup with ſuch a "perſon," ſays Epictetus, "you complain "of the long ſtories which he tells you "about his Myſian wars. 'Now my "friend, ſays he, having told you how I "took poſſeſſion of an eminence at ſuch a "place, I will tell you how I was beſieged "in

" in ſuch another place.' But if you have " a mind not to be troubled with his long " ſtories, do not accept of his ſupper. If " you accept of his ſupper, you have not " the leaſt pretence to complain of his long " ſtories. It is the ſame caſe with what " you call the evils of human life. Never " complain of that of which it is at all times " in your power to rid yourſelf." Notwithſtanding this gaiety and even levity of expreſſion, however, the alternative of leaving life, or of remaining in it, was, according to the Stoics, a matter of the moſt ſerious and important deliberation. We ought never to leave it till we were diſtinctly called upon to do ſo by that ſuperintending Power which had originally placed us in it. But we were to conſider ourſelves as called upon to do ſo, not merely at the appointed and unavoidable term of human life. Whenever the providence of that ſuperintending Power had rendered our condition in life upon the whole the proper object rather of rejection than of choice; the great rule which he had given us for the direction of our conduct, then required

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us to leave it. We might then be ſaid to hear the awful and benevolent voice of that divine Being diſtinctly calling upon us to do ſo.

It was upon this account that, according to the Stoics, it might be the duty of a wiſe man to remove out of life though he was perfectly happy; while, on the contrary, it might be the duty of a weak man to remain in it; though he was neceſſarily miſerable. If, in the ſituation of the wiſe man, there were more circumſtances which were the natural objects of rejection than of choice, the whole ſituation became the object of rejection, and the rule which the Gods had given him for the direction of his conduct, required that he ſhould remove out of it as ſpeedily as particular circumſtances might render convenient. He was, however, perfectly happy even during the time that he might think proper to remain in it. He had placed this happineſs, not in obtaining the objects of his choice, or in avoiding thoſe of his rejection; but in always chooſing and rejecting with exact pro-

propriety; not in the ſucceſs, but in the fitneſs of his endeavours and exertions. If, in the ſituation of the weak man, on the contrary, there were more circumſtances which were the natural objects of choice than of rejection; his whole ſituation became the proper object of choice, and it was his duty to remain in it. He was unhappy, however, from not knowing how to uſe thoſe circumſtances. Let his cards be ever ſo good, he did not know how to play them, and could enjoy no ſort of real ſatisfaction, either in the progreſs, or in the event of the game, in whatever manner it might happen to turn out*.

The propriety, upon ſome occaſions, of voluntary death, though it was, perhaps, more inſiſted upon by the Stoics, than by any other ſect of ancient philoſophers, was, however, a doctrine common to them all, even to the peaceable and indolent Epicureans. During the age in which flouriſhed the founders of all the principal ſects of

* See Cicero de finibus, lib. 3. c. 13. Olivet's edition.

ancient

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or another, from the prevalence of ſome hoſtile and furious faction, to be condemned to the moſt cruel and ignominious puniſhment. If he was taken priſoner in war, or if the city of which he was a member was conquered, he was expoſed, if poſſible, to ſtill greater injuries and inſults. But every man naturally, or rather neceſſarily, familiarizes his imagination with the diſtreſſes to which he foreſees that his ſituation may frequently expoſe him. It is impoſſible that a ſailor ſhould not frequently think of ſtorms and ſhipwrecks, and foundering at ſea, and of how he himſelf is likely both to feel and to act upon ſuch occaſions. It was impoſſible, in the ſame manner, that a Grecian patriot or hero ſhould not familiarize his imagination with all the different calamities to which he was ſenſible his ſituation muſt frequently, or rather conſtantly expoſe him. As an American ſavage prepares his death-ſong, and conſiders how he ſhould act when he has fallen into the hands of his enemies, and is by them put to death in the moſt lingering tortures, and amidſt the inſults and deriſion

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of all the ſpectators; ſo a Grecian patriot or hero could not avoid frequently employing his thoughts in conſidering what he ought both to ſuffer and to do in baniſhment, in captivity, when reduced to ſlavery, when put to the torture, when brought to the ſcaffold. But the philoſophers of all the different ſects very juſtly repreſented virtue; that is, wiſe, juſt, firm, and temperate conduct; not only as the moſt probable, but as the certain and infallible road to happineſs even in this life. This conduct, however, could not always exempt, and might even ſometimes expoſe the perſon who followed it to all the calamities which were incident to that unſettled ſituation of public affairs. They endeavoured, therefore, to ſhow that happineſs was either altogether, or at leaſt in a great meaſure, independent of fortune; the Stoics, that it was ſo altogether; the Academic and Peripatetic philoſophers, that it was ſo in a great meaſure. Wiſe, prudent, and good conduct was, in the firſt place, the conduct moſt likely to enſure ſucceſs in every ſpecies of undertaking; and ſecondly, though it

ſhould

ſhould fail of ſucceſs, yet the mind was not left without conſolation. The virtuous man might ſtill enjoy the complete approbation of his own breaſt; and might ſtill feel that, how untoward ſoever things might be without, all was calm and peace and concord within. He might generally comfort himſelf, too, with the aſſurance that he poſſeſſed the love and eſteem of every intelligent and impartial ſpectator, who could not fail both to admire his conduct, and to regret his misfortune.

Thoſe philoſophers endeavoured, at the ſame time, to ſhow, that the greateſt misfortunes to which human life was liable, might be ſupported more eaſily than was commonly imagined. They endeavoured to point out the comforts which a man might ſtill enjoy when reduced to poverty, when driven into baniſhment, when expoſed to the injuſtice of popular clamour, when labouring under blindneſs, under deafneſs, in the extremity of old age, upon the approach of death. They pointed out, too, the conſiderations which might contri-

contribute to ſupport his conſtancy under the agonies of pain and even of torture, in ſickneſs, in ſorrow for th- 'ſs of children, for the death of friends and relations, &c. The few fragments which have come down to us of what the ancient philoſophers had written upon theſe ſubjects, form, perhaps, one of the moſt inſtructive, as well as one of the moſt intereſting remains of antiquity. The ſpirit and manhood of their doctrines make a wonderful contraſt with the deſponding, plaintive, and whining tone of ſome modern ſyſtems.

But while thoſe ancient philoſophers endeavoured in this manner to ſuggeſt every conſideration which could, as Milton ſays, arm the obdured breaſt with ſtubborn patience, as with triple ſteel; they, at the ſame time, laboured above all to convince their followers that there neither was nor could be any evil in death; and that, if their ſituation became at any time too hard for their conſtancy to ſupport, the remedy was at hand, the door was open, and they might, without fear, walk out when they

pleaſed. If there was no world beyond the preſent, death, they ſaid, could be no evil; and if there was another world, the Gods muſt likewiſe be in that other, and a juſt man could fear no evil while under their protection. Thoſe philoſophers, in ſhort, prepared a death-ſong, if I may ſay ſo, which the Grecian patriots and heroes might make uſe of upon the proper occaſions; and, of all the different ſects, the Stoics, I think it muſt be acknowledged, had prepared by far the moſt animated and ſpirited ſong.

Suicide, however, never ſeems to have been very common among the Greeks. Excepting Cleomenes, I cannot at preſent recollect any very illuſtrious, either patriot or hero of Greece, who died by his own hand. The death of Ariſtomenes is as much beyond the period of true hiſtory as that of Ajax. The common ſtory of the death of Themiſtocles, though within that period, bears upon its face all the marks of a moſt romantic fable. Of all the Greek heroes whoſe lives have been writ-

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ten by Plutarch, Cleomenes appears to have been the only one who periſhed in this manner. Theramines, Socrates, and Phocion, who certainly did not want courage, ſuffered themſelves to be ſent to priſon, and ſubmitted patiently to that death to which the injuſtice of their fellow-citizens had condemned them. The brave Eumenes allowed himſelf to be delivered up, by his own mutinous ſoldiers, to his enemy Antigonus, and was ſtarved to death, without attempting any violence. The gallant Philopœmen ſuffered himſelf to be taken priſoner by the Meſſenians, was thrown into a dungeon, and was ſuppoſed to have been privately poiſoned. Several of the philoſophers, indeed, are ſaid to have died in this manner; but their lives have been ſo very fooliſhly written, that very little credit is due to the greater part of the tales which are told of them. Three different accounts have been given of the death of Zeno the Stoic. One is, that after enjoying, for ninety-eight years, the moſt perfect ſtate of health, he happened, in going out of his ſchool, to fall; and though

he ſuffered no other damage than that of breaking or diſlocating one of his fingers, he ſtruck the ground with his hand, and, in the words of the Niobe of Euripides, ſaid, *I come, why doeſt thou call me?* and immediately went home and hanged himſelf. At that great age, one ſhould think, he might have had a little more patience. Another account is, that, at the ſame age, and in conſequence of a like accident, he ſtarved himſelf to death. The third account is, that, at ſeventy-two years of age, he died in the natural way; by far the moſt probable account of the three, and ſupported too by the authority of a cotemporary, who muſt have had every opportunity of being well informed; of Perſæus, originally the ſlave, and afterwards the friend and diſciple of Zeno. The firſt account is given by Apollonius of Tyre, who flouriſhed about the time of Auguſtus Cæſar, between two and three hundred years after the death of Zeno. I know not who is the author of the ſecond account. Apollonius, who was himſelf a Stoic, had probably thought it would do honour to the founder

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of a ſect which talked ſo much about voluntary death, to die in this manner by his own hand. Men of letters, though, after their death, they are frequently more talked of than the greateſt princes or ſtateſmen of their times, are generally, during their life, ſo obſcure and inſignificant that their adventures are ſeldom recorded by cotemporary hiſtorians. Thoſe of after-ages, in order to ſatisfy the public curioſity, and having no authentic documents either to ſupport or to contradict their narratives, ſeem frequently to have faſhioned them according to their own fancy; and almoſt always with a great mixture of the marvellous. In this particular caſe the marvellous, though ſupported by no authority, ſeems to have prevailed over the probable, though ſupported by the beſt. Diogenes Laertius plainly gives the preference to the ſtory of Apollonius. Lucian and Lactantius appear both to have given credit to that of the great age and of the violent death.

This faſhion of voluntary death appears to have been much more prevalent among the proud Romans, than it ever was among the lively, ingenious, and accommodating Greeks. Even among the Romans, the faſhion ſeems not to have been eſtabliſhed in the early and, what are called, the virtuous ages of the republic. The common ſtory of the death of Regulus, though probably a fable, could never have been invented, had it been ſuppoſed that any diſhonour could fall upon that hero, from patiently ſubmitting to the tortures which the Carthaginians are ſaid to have inflicted upon him. In the later ages of the republic ſome diſhonour, I apprehend, would have attended this ſubmiſſion. In the different civil wars which preceded the fall of the commonwealth, many of the eminent men of all the contending parties choſe rather to periſh by their own hands, than to fall into thoſe of their enemies. The death of Cato, celebrated by Cicero, and cenſured by Cæſar, and become the ſubject of a very ſerious controverſy between, perhaps, the two moſt illuſtrious advocates that the world had ever beheld,

ſtamped a character of ſplendour upon this method of dying which it ſeems to have retained for ſeveral ages after. The eloquence of Cicero was ſuperior to that of Cæſar. The admiring prevailed greatly over the cenſuring party, and the lovers of liberty, for many ages afterwards, looked up to Cato as to the moſt venerable martyr of the republican party. The head of a party, the Cardinal de Retz obſerves, may do what he pleaſes; as long as he retains the confidence of his own friends, he can never do wrong; a maxim of which his Eminence had himſelf, upon ſeveral occaſions, an opportunity of experiencing the truth. Cato, it ſeems, joined to his other virtues that of an excellent bottle companion. His enemies accuſed him of drunkenneſs, but, ſays Seneca, whoever objected this vice to Cato, will find it much eaſier to prove that drunkenneſs is a virtue, than that Cato could be addicted to any vice.

Under the Emperors this method of dying ſeems to have been, for a long time, perfectly faſhionable. In the epiſtles of

Pliny we find an account of ſeveral perſons who choſe to die in this manner, rather from vanity and oſtentation, it would ſeem, than from what would appear, even to a ſober and judicious Stoic, any proper or neceſſary reaſon. Even the ladies, who are ſeldom behind in following the faſhion, ſeem frequently to have choſen, moſt unneceſſarily, to die in this manner; and, like the ladies in Bengal, to accompany, upon ſome occaſions, their huſbands to the tomb. The prevalence of this faſhion certainly occaſioned many deaths which would not otherwiſe have happened. All the havock, however, which this, perhaps the higheſt exertion of human vanity and impertinence, could occaſion, would, probably, at no time, be very great.

The principle of ſuicide, the principle which would teach us, upon ſome occaſions, to conſider that violent action as an object of applauſe and approbation, ſeems to be altogether a refinement of philoſophy. Nature in her ſound and healthful ſtate, ſeems never to prompt us to ſuicide. There is, indeed,

indeed, a ſpecies of melancholy (a diſeaſe to which human nature, among its other calamities, is unhappily ſubject) which ſeems to be accompanied with, what one may call, an irreſiſtible appetite for ſelf-deſtruction. In circumſtances often of the higheſt external proſperity, and ſometimes too, in ſpite even of the moſt ſerious and deeply impreſſed ſentiments of religion, this diſeaſe has frequently been known to drive its wretched victims to this fatal extremity. The unfortunate perſons who periſh in this miſerable manner, are the proper objects, not of cenſure, but of commiſeration. To attempt to puniſh them, when they are beyond the reach of all human puniſhment, is not more abſurd than it is unjuſt. That puniſhment can fall only on their ſurviving friends and relations, who are always perfectly innocent, and to whom the loſs of their friend, in this diſgraceful manner, muſt always be alone a very heavy calamity. Nature, in her ſound and healthful ſtate, prompts us to avoid diſtreſs upon all occaſions; upon many occaſions to defend ourſelves againſt it, though at the hazard, or even

even with the certainty of periſhing in that defence. But, when we have neither been able to defend ourſelves from it, nor have periſhed in that defence, no natural principle, no regard to the approbation of the ſuppoſed impartial ſpectator, to the judgment of the man within the breaſt, ſeems to call upon us to eſcape from it by deſtroying ourſelves. It is only the conſciouſneſs of our own weakneſs, of our own incapacity to ſupport the calamity with proper manhood and firmneſs, which can drive us to this reſolution. I do not remember to have either read or heard of any American ſavage, who, upon being taken priſoner by ſome hoſtile tribe, put himſelf to death, in order to avoid being afterwards put to death in torture, and amidſt the inſults and mockery of his enemies. He places his glory in ſupporting thoſe torments with manhood, and in retorting thoſe inſults with tenfold contempt and deriſion.

This contempt of life and death, however, and, at the ſame time, the moſt entire ſubmiſſion to the order of Providence; the moſt

moſt complete contentment with every event which the current of human affairs could poſſibly caſt up, may be conſidered as the two fundamental doctrines upon which reſted the whole fabric of Stoical morality. The independent and ſpirited, but often harſh Epictetus, may be conſidered as the great apoſtle of the firſt of thoſe doctrines: the mild, the humane, the benevolent Antoninus, of the ſecond.

The emancipated ſlave of Epaphriditus, who, in his youth, had been ſubjected to the inſolence of a brutal maſter, who, in his riper years, was, by the jealouſy and caprice of Domitian, baniſhed from Rome and Athens, and obliged to dwell at Nicopolis, and who, by the ſame tyrant, might expect every moment to be ſent to Gyaræ, or, perhaps, to be put to death; could preſerve his tranquillity only by foſtering in his mind the moſt ſovereign contempt of human life. He never exults ſo much, accordingly his eloquence is never ſo animated as when he repreſents the futility and

and nothingneſs of all its pleaſures and all its pains.

The good-natured Emperor, the abſolute ſovereign of the whole civilized part of the world, who certainly had no peculiar reaſon to complain of his own allotment, delights in expreſſing his contentment with the ordinary courſe of things, and in pointing out beauties even in thoſe parts of it where vulgar obſervers are not apt to ſee any. There is a propriety and even an engaging grace, he obſerves, in old age as well as in youth; and the weakneſs and decrepitude of the one ſtate are as ſuitable to nature as the bloom and vigour of the other. Death, too, is juſt as proper a termination of old age, as youth is of childhood, or manhood of youth. As we frequently ſay, he remarks upon another occaſion, that the phyſician has ordered to ſuch a man to ride on horſeback, or to uſe the cold bath, or to walk barefooted; ſo ought we to ſay, that Nature, the great conductor and phyſician of the univerſe, has ordered to ſuch a man a diſeaſe, or the ampu-

amputation of a limb, or the loſs of a child. By the preſcriptions of ordinary phyſicians the patient ſwallows many a bitter potion; undergoes many a painful operation. From the very uncertain hope, however, that health may be the conſequence, he gladly ſubmits to all. The harſheſt preſcriptions of the great Phyſician of nature, the patient may, in the ſame manner, hope will contribute to his own health, to his own final proſperity and happineſs: and he may be perfectly aſſured that they not only contribute, but are indiſpenſably neceſſary to the health, to the proſperity and happineſs of the univerſe, to the furtherance and advancement of the great plan of Jupiter. Had they not been ſo, the univerſe would never have produced them; its all-wiſe Architect and Conductor would never have ſuffered them to happen. As all, even the ſmalleſt of the co-exiſtent parts of the univerſe, are exactly fitted to one another, and all contribute to compoſe one immenſe and connected ſyſtem; ſo all, even apparently the moſt inſignificant of the

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ſucceſſive events which follow one another, make parts, and neceſſary parts, of that great chain of cauſes and effects which had no beginning, and which will have no end; and which, as they all neceſſarily reſult from the original arrangement and contrivance of the whole; ſo they are all eſſentially neceſſary not only to its proſperity, but to its continuance and preſervation. Whoever does not cordially embrace whatever befalls him, whoever is ſorry that it has befallen him, whoever wiſhes that it had not befallen him, wiſhes, ſo far as in him lies, to ſtop the motion of the univerſe, to break that great chain of ſucceſſion, by the progreſs of which that ſyſtem can alone be continued and preſerved, and, for ſome little conveniency of his own, to diſorder and diſcompoſe the whole machine of the world. "O world," ſays he, in another place, "all things are ſuitable to me which "are ſuitable to thee. Nothing is too early "or too late to me which is ſeaſonable for "thee. All is fruit to me which thy ſea-"ſons bring forth. From thee are all "things; in thee are all things; for thee

"are

" are all things. One man ſays, O be-
" loved city of Cecrops. Wilt not thou
" ſay, O beloved city of God?"

From theſe very ſublime doctrines the Stoics, or at leaſt ſome of the Stoics, attempted to deduce all their paradoxes.

The Stoical wiſe man endeavoured to enter into the views of the gerat Superintendant of the univerſe, and to ſee things in the ſame light in which that divine Being beheld them. But to the great Superintendant of the univerſe, all the different events which the courſe of his providence may bring forth, what to us appear the ſmalleſt and the greateſt, the burſting of a bubble, as Mr. Pope ſays, and that of a world, for example, were perfectly equal, were equally parts of that great chain which he had predeſtined from all eternity, were equally the effects of the ſame unerring wiſdom, of the ſame univerſal and boundleſs benevolence. To the Stoical wiſe man, in the ſame manner, all thoſe different events were perfectly equal. In the courſe

courſe of thoſe events, indeed, a little department, in which he had himſelf ſome little management and direction, had been aſſigned to him. In this department he endeavoured to act as properly as he could, and to conduct himſelf according to thoſe orders which, he underſtood, had been preſcribed to him. But he took no anxious or paſſionate concern either in the ſucceſs, or in the diſappointment of his own moſt faithful endeavours. The higheſt proſperity and the total deſtruction of that little department, of that little ſyſtem which had been in ſome meaſure committed to his charge, were perfectly indifferent to him. If thoſe events had depended upon him, he would have choſen the one, and he would have rejected the other. But as they did not depend upon him, he truſted to a ſuperior wiſdom, and was perfectly ſatisfied that the event which happened, whatever it might be, was the very event which he himſelf, had he known all the connections and dependencies of things, would moſt earneſtly and devoutly have wiſhed for. Whatever he did under the influence

influence and direction of thoſe principles was equally perfect; and when he ſtretched out his finger, to give the example which they commonly made uſe of, he performed an action in every reſpect as meritorious, as worthy of praiſe and admiration, as when he laid down his life for the ſervice of his country. As, to the great Superintendant of the univerſe, the greateſt and the ſmalleſt exertions of his power, the formation and diſſolution of a world, the formation and diſſolution of a bubble, were equally eaſy, were equally admirable, and equally the effects of the ſame divine wiſdom and benevolence; ſo, to the Stoical wiſe man, what we would call the great action, required no more exertion than the little one, was equally eaſy, proceeded from exactly the ſame principles, was in no reſpect more meritorious, nor worthy of any higher degree of praiſe and admiration.

As all thoſe who had arrived at this ſtate of perfection, were equally happy; ſo all thoſe who fell in the ſmalleſt degree

ſhort of it, how nearly ſoever they might approach to it, were equally miſerable. As the man, they ſaid, who was but an inch below the ſurface of the water, could no more breathe than he who was an hundred yards below it; ſo the man who had not completely ſubdued all his private, partial, and ſelfiſh paſſions, who had any other earneſt deſire but that for the univerſal happineſs, who had not completely emerged from that abyſs of miſery and diſorder into which his anxiety for the gratification of thoſe private, partial, and ſelfiſh paſſions had involved him, could no more breathe the free air of liberty and independency, could no more enjoy the ſecurity and happineſs of the wiſe man, than he who was moſt remote from that ſituation. As all the actions of the wiſe man were perfect, and equally perfect; ſo all thoſe of the man who had not arrived at this ſupreme wiſdom were faulty, and, as ſome Stoics pretended, equally faulty. As one truth, they ſaid, could not be more true, nor one falſehood more falſe than another; ſo an honourable action could not be more

honourable, nor a ſhameful one more ſhameful than another. As in ſhooting at a mark, the man who miſſed it by an inch had equally miſſed it with him who had done ſo by a hundred yards; ſo the man who, in what to us appears the moſt inſignificant action, had acted improperly and without a ſufficient reaſon, was equally faulty with him who had done ſo in, what to us appears, the moſt important; the man who has killed a cock, for example, improperly and without a ſufficient reaſon, with him who had murdered his father.

If the firſt of thoſe two paradoxes ſhould appear ſufficiently violent, the ſecond is evidently too abſurd to deſerve any ſerious conſideration. It is, indeed, ſo very abſurd, that one can ſcarce help ſuſpecting that it muſt have been in ſome meaſure miſunderſtood or miſrepreſented. At any rate, I cannot allow myſelf to believe that ſuch men as Zeno or Cleanthes, men, it is ſaid, of the moſt ſimple as well as of the moſt ſublime eloquence, could be the authors, either of theſe, or of the greater part of the

other Stoical paradoxes, which are in general mere impertinent quibbles, and do ſo little honour to their ſyſtem that I ſhall give no further account of them. I am diſpoſed to impute them rather to Chryſippus, the diſciple and follower, indeed, of Zeno and Cleanthes, but who, from all that has been delivered down to us concerning him, ſeems to have been a mere dialectical pedant, without taſte or elegance of any kind. He may have been the firſt who reduced their doctrines into a ſcholaſtic or technical ſyſtem of artificial definitions, diviſions, and ſubdiviſions; one of the moſt effectual expedients, perhaps, for extinguiſhing whatever degree of good ſenſe there may be in any moral or metaphyſical doctrine. Such a man may very eaſily be ſuppoſed to have underſtood too literally ſome animated expreſſions of his maſters in deſcribing the happineſs of the man of perfect virtue, and the unhappineſs of whoever fell ſhort of that character.

The Stoics in general ſeem to have admitted that there might be a degree of proficiency

ficiency in thoſe who had not advanced to perfect virtue and happineſs. They diſtributed thoſe proficients into different claſſes, according to the degree of their advancement; and they called the imperfect virtues which they ſuppoſed them capable of exerciſing, not rectitudes, but proprieties, fitneſſes, decent and becoming actions, for which a plauſible or probable reaſon could be aſſigned, what Cicero expreſſes by the Latin word *officia*, and Seneca, I think more exactly, by that of *convenientia*. The doctrine of thoſe imperfect, but attainable virtues, ſeems to have conſtituted what we may call the practical morality of the Stoics. It is the ſubject of Cicero's Offices; and is ſaid to have been that of another book written by Marcus Brutus, but which is now loſt.

The plan and ſyſtem which Nature has ſketched out for our conduct, ſeems to be altogether different from that of the Stoical philoſophy.

By Nature the events which immediately affect that little department in which we ourſelves have ſome little management and direction, which immediately affect ourſelves, our friends, our country, are the events which intereſt us the moſt, and which chiefly excite our deſires and averſions, our hopes and fears, our joys and ſorrows. Should thoſe paſſions be, what they are very apt to be, too vehement, Nature has provided a proper remedy and correction. The real or even the imaginary preſence of the impartial ſpectator, the authority of the man within the breaſt, is always at hand to overawe them into the proper tone and temper of moderation.

If, notwithſtanding our moſt faithful exertions, all the events which can affect this little department, ſhould turn out the moſt unfortunate and diſaſtrous, Nature has by no means left us without conſolation. That conſolation may be drawn, not only from the complete approbation of the man within the breaſt, but, if poſſible, from a

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ſtill nobler and more generous principle, from a firm reliance upon, and a reverential ſubmiſſion to, that benevolent wiſdom which directs all the events of human life, and which, we may be aſſured, would never have ſuffered thoſe misfortunes to happen, had they not been indiſpenſably neceſſary for the good of the whole.

Nature has not preſcribed to us this ſublime contemplation as the great buſineſs and occupation of our lives. She only points it out to us as the conſolation of our misfortunes. The Stoical philoſophy preſcribes it as the great buſineſs and occupation of our lives. That philoſophy teaches us to intereſt ourſelves earneſtly and anxiouſly in no events, external to the good order of our own minds, to the propriety of our own chooſing and rejecting, except in thoſe which concern a department where we neither have nor ought to have any ſort of management or direction, the department of the great Superintendant of the univerſe. By the perfect apathy which it preſcribes to us, by endeavouring, not mere-

ly to moderate, but to eradicate all our private, partial, and ſelfiſh affections, by ſuffering us to feel for whatever can befall ourſelves, our friends, our country, not even the ſympathetic and reduced paſſions of the impartial ſpectator, it endeavours to render us altogether indifferent and unconcerned in the ſucceſs or miſcarriage of every thing which Nature has preſcribed to us as the proper buſineſs and occupation of our lives.

The reaſonings of philoſophy, it may be ſaid, though they may confound and perplex the underſtanding, can never break down the neceſſary connection which Nature has eſtabliſhed between cauſes and their effects. The cauſes which naturally excite our deſires and averſions, our hopes and fears, our joys and ſorrows, would no doubt, notwithſtanding all the reaſonings of Stoiciſm, produce upon each individual, according to the degree of his actual ſenſibility, their proper and neceſſary effects. The judgments of the man within the breaſt, however, might be a good deal affected

fected by thoſe reaſonings, and that great inmate might be taught by them to attempt to overawe all our private, partial, and ſelfiſh affections into a more or leſs perfect tranquillity. To direct the judgments of this inmate is the great purpoſe of all ſyſtems of morality. That the Stoical philoſophy had very great influence upon the character and conduct of its followers, cannot be doubted; and that though it might ſometimes incite them to unneceſſary violence, its general tendency was to animate them to actions of the moſt heroic magnanimity and moſt extenſive benevolence.

IV. Beſides theſe ancient, there are ſome modern ſyſtems, according to which virtue conſiſts in propriety; or in the ſuitableneſs of the affection from which we act, to the cauſe or object which excites it. The ſyſtem of Dr. Clark, which places virtue in acting according to the relations of things, in regulating our conduct according to the fitneſs or incongruity which there may be in the application of certain actions to certain things, or to certain relations: that

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of Mr. Woollaſton, which places it in acting according to the truth of things, according to their proper nature and eſſence, or in treating them as what they really are, and not as what they are not: that of my Lord Shafteſbury, which places it in maintaining a proper balance of the affections, and in allowing no paſſion to go beyond its proper ſphere; are all of them more or leſs inaccurate deſcriptions of the ſame fundamental idea.

None of thoſe ſyſtems either give, or even pretend to give, any preciſe or diſtinct meaſure by which this fitneſs or propriety of affection can be aſcertained or judged of. That preciſe and diſtinct meaſure can be found nowhere but in the ſympathetic feelings of the impartial and well-informed ſpectator.

The deſcription of virtue, beſides, which is either given, or at leaſt meant and intended to be given in each of thoſe ſyſtems, for ſome of the modern authors are not very fortunate in their manner of expreſſing themſelves, is no doubt quite juſt, ſo far

as

as it goes. There is no virtue without propriety, and wherever there is propriety ſome degree of approbation is due. But ſtill this deſcription is imperfect. For though propriety is an eſſential ingredient in every virtuous action, it is not always the ſole ingredient. Beneficent actions have in them another quality by which they appear not only to deſerve approbation but recompenſe. None of thoſe ſyſtems account either eaſily or ſufficiently for that ſuperior degree of eſteem which ſeems due to ſuch actions, or for that diverſity of ſentiment which they naturally excite. Neither is the deſcription of vice more complete. For, in the ſame manner, though impropriety is a neceſſary ingredient in every vicious action, it is not always the ſole ingredient; and there is often the higheſt degree of abſurdity and impropriety in very harmleſs and inſignificant actions. Deliberate actions, of a pernicious tendency to thoſe we live with, have, beſides their impropriety, a peculiar quality of their own by which they appear to deſerve, not only diſapprobation, but puniſhment; and

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to be the objects, not of diſlike merely, but of reſentment and revenge: and none of thoſe ſyſtems eaſily and ſufficiently account for that ſuperior degree of deteſtation which we feel for ſuch actions.

CHAP. II.

Of thoſe Syſtems which make Virtue conſiſt in Prudence.

THE moſt ancient of thoſe ſyſtems which make virtue conſiſt in prudence, and of which any conſiderable remains have come down to us, is that of Epicurus, who is ſaid, however, to have borrowed all the leading principles of his philoſophy from ſome of thoſe who had gone before him, particularly from Ariſtippus; though it is very probable, notwithſtanding this allegation of his enemies, that at leaſt his manner of applying thoſe principles was altogether his own.

Accord-

According to Epicurus*, bodily pleaſure and pain were the ſole ultimate objects of natural deſire and averſion. That they were always the natural objects of thoſe paſſions, he thought required no proof. Pleaſure might, indeed, appear ſometimes to be avoided; not, however, becauſe it was pleaſure, but becauſe, by the enjoyment of it, we ſhould either forfeit ſome greater pleaſure, or expoſe ourſelves to ſome pain that was more to be avoided than this pleaſure was to be deſired. Pain, in the ſame manner, might appear ſometimes to be eligible; not, however, becauſe it was pain, but becauſe by enduring it we might either avoid a ſtill greater pain, or acquire ſome pleaſure of much more importance. That bodily pain and pleaſure, therefore, were always the natural objects of deſire and averſion, was, he thought, abundantly evident. Nor was it leſs ſo, he imagined, that they were the ſole ultimate objects of thoſe paſſions. Whatever elſe was either deſired or avoided, was ſo, according to him, upon

* See Cicero de finibus, lib. i. Diogenes Laert. l. x.

account

account of its tendency to produce one or other of thoſe ſenſations. The tendency to procure pleaſure rendered power and riches deſirable, as the contrary tendency to produce pain made poverty and inſignificancy the objects of averſion. Honour and reputation were valued, becauſe the eſteem and love of thoſe we live with were of the greateſt conſequence both to procure pleaſure and to defend us from pain. Ignominy and bad fame, on the contrary, were to be avoided, becauſe the hatred, contempt, and reſentment of thoſe we lived with, deſtroyed all ſecurity, and neceſſarily expoſed us to the greateſt bodily evils.

All the pleaſures and pains of the mind were, according to Epicurus, ultimately derived from thoſe of the body. The mind was happy when it thought of the paſt pleaſures of the body, and hoped for others to come: and it was miſerable when it thought of the pains which the body had formerly endured, and dreaded the ſame or greater thereafter.

But

But the pleaſures and pains of the mind, though ultimately derived from thoſe of the body, were vaſtly greater than their originals. The body felt only the ſenſation of the preſent inſtant, whereas the mind felt alſo the paſt and the future, the one by remembrance, the other by anticipation, and conſequently both ſuffered and enjoyed much more. When we are under the greateſt bodily pain, he obſerved, we ſhall always find, if we attend to it, that it is not the ſuffering of the preſent inſtant which chiefly torments us, but either the agonizing remembrance of the paſt, or the yet more horrible dread of the future. The pain of each inſtant, conſidered by itſelf, and cut off from all that goes before and all that comes after it, is a trifle not worth the regarding. Yet this is all which the body can ever be ſaid to ſuffer. In the ſame manner, when we enjoy the greateſt pleaſure, we ſhall always find that the bodily ſenſation, the ſenſation of the preſent inſtant, makes but a ſmall part of our happineſs, that our enjoyment chiefly ariſes either from the cheerful recollection of the paſt, or the ſtill more joyous

joyous anticipation of the future, and that the mind always contributes by much the largeſt ſhare of the entertainment.

Since our happineſs and miſery, therefore, depended chiefly on the mind, if this part of our nature was well diſpoſed, if our thoughts and opinions were as they ſhould be, it was of little importance in what manner our body was affected. Though under great bodily pain, we might ſtill enjoy a conſiderable ſhare of happineſs, if our reaſon and judgment maintained their ſuperiority. We might entertain ourſelves with the remembrance of paſt, and with the hopes of future pleaſure; we might ſoften the rigour of our pains, by recollecting what it was which, even in this ſituation, we were under any neceſſity of ſuffering. That this was merely the bodily ſenſation, the pain of the preſent inſtant, which by itſelf could never be very great. That whatever agony we ſuffered from the dread of its continuance, was the effect of an opinion of the mind which might be corrected by juſter ſentiments; by conſidering that, if our

our pains were violent, they would probably be of ſhort duration; and that if they were of long continuance, they would probably be moderate, and admit of many intervals of eaſe; and that, at any rate, death was always at hand and within call to deliver us, which as, according to him, it put an end to all ſenſation, either of pain or pleaſure, could not be regarded as an evil. When we are, ſaid he, death is not; and when death is, we are not; death therefore can be nothing to us.

If the actual ſenſation of poſitive pain was in itſelf ſo little to be feared, that of pleaſure was ſtill leſs to be deſired. Naturally the ſenſation of pleaſure was much leſs pungent than that of pain. If, therefore, this laſt could take ſo very little from the happineſs of a well-diſpoſed mind, the other could add ſcarce any thing to it. When the body was free from pain and the mind from fear and anxiety, the ſuperadded ſenſation of bodily pleaſure could be of very little importance; and though it might

diverſify, could not properly be ſaid to increaſe the happineſs of this ſituation.

In eaſe of body, therefore, and in ſecurity or tranquillity of mind, conſiſted, according to Epicurus, the moſt perfect ſtate of human nature, the moſt complete happineſs which man was capable of enjoying. To obtain this great end of natural deſire was the ſole object of all the virtues, which, according to him, were not deſirable upon their own account, but upon account of their tendency to bring about this ſituation.

Prudence, for example, though, according to this philoſophy, the ſource and principle of all the virtues, was not deſirable upon its own account. That careful and laborious and circumſpect ſtate of mind, ever watchful and ever attentive to the moſt diſtant conſequences of every action, could not be a thing pleaſant or agreeable for its own ſake, but upon account of its tendency to procure the greateſt goods and to keep off the greateſt evils.

To

To abſtain frompleaſure too, to curb and reſtrain our natural paſſions for enjoyment, which was the office of temperance, could never be deſirable for its own ſake. The whole value of this virtue aroſe from its utility, from its enabling us to poſtpone the preſent enjoyment for the ſake of a greater to come, or to avoid a greater pain that might enſue from it. Temperance, in ſhort, was nothing but prudence with regard to pleaſure.

To ſupport labour, to endure pain, to be expoſed to danger or to death, the ſituations which fortitude would often lead us into, were ſurely ſtill leſs the objects of natural deſire. They were choſen only to avoid greater evils. We ſubmitted to labour, in order to avoid the greater ſhame and pain of poverty, and we expoſed ourſelves to danger and to death in defence of our liberty and property, the means and inſtruments of pleaſure and happineſs; or in defence of our country, in the ſafety of which our own was neceſſarily comprehended. Fortitude enabled us to do all

this cheerfully, as the beſt which, in our preſent ſituation, could poſſibly be done, and was in reality no more than prudence, good judgment, and preſence of mind in properly appreciating pain, labour, and danger, always chooſing the leſs in order to avoid the greater.

It is the ſame caſe with juſtice. To abſtain from what is another's was not deſirable on its own account, and it could not ſurely be better for you, that I ſhould poſſeſs what is my own, than that you ſhould poſſeſs it. You ought, however, to abſtain from whatever belongs to me, becauſe by doing otherwiſe you will provoke the reſentment and indignation of mankind. The ſecurity and tranquillity of your mind will be entirely deſtroyed. You will be filled with fear and conſternation at the thought of that puniſhment which you will imagine that men are at all times ready to inflict upon you, and from which no power, no art, no concealment, will ever, in your own fancy, be ſufficient to protect you. That other ſpecies of juſtice which conſiſts in doing

doing proper good offices to different perſons, according to the various relations of neighbours, kinſmen, friends, benefactors, ſuperiors, or equals, which they may ſtand in to us, is recommended by the ſame reaſons. To act properly in all theſe different relations procures us the eſteem and love of thoſe we live with; as to do otherwiſe excites their contempt and hatred. By the one we naturally ſecure, by the other we neceſſarily endanger our own eaſe and tranquillity, the great and ultimate objects of all our deſires. The whole virtue of juſtice, therefore, the moſt important of all the virtues, is no more than diſcreet and prudent conduct with regard to our neighbours.

Such is the doctrine of Epicurus concerning the nature of virtue. It may ſeem extraordinary that this philoſopher, who is deſcribed as a perſon of the moſt amiable manners, ſhould never have obſerved, that, whatever may be the tendency of thoſe virtues, or of the contrary vices, with regard to our bodily eaſe and ſecurity, the ſentiments which they naturally excite in others

are the objects of a much more paſſionate deſire or averſion than all their other conſequences; that to be amiable, to be reſpectable, to be the proper object of eſteem, is by every well-diſpoſed mind more valued than all the eaſe and ſecurity which love, reſpect, and eſteem can procure us; that, on the contrary, to be odious, to be contemptible, to be the proper object of indignation, is more dreadful than all that we can ſuffer in our body from hatred, contempt, or indignation; and that conſequently our deſire of the one character, and our averſion to the other, cannot ariſe from any regard to the effects which either of them is likely to produce upon the body.

This ſyſtem is, no doubt, altogether inconſiſtent with that which I have been endeavouring to eſtabliſh. It is not difficult, however, to diſcover from what phaſis, if I may ſay ſo, from what particular view or aſpect of nature, this account of things derives its probability. By the wiſe contrivance of the Author of nature, virtue is upon all ordinary occaſions, even with regard to this

this life, real wiſdom, and the ſureſt and readieſt means of obtaining both ſafety and advantage. Our ſucceſs or diſappointment in our undertakings muſt very much depend upon the good or bad opinion which is commonly entertained of us, and upon the general diſpoſition of thoſe we live with, either to aſſiſt or to oppoſe us. But the beſt, the ſureſt, the eaſieſt, and the readieſt way of obtaining the advantageous and of avoiding the unfavourable judgments of others, is undoubtedly to render ourſelves the proper objects of the former and not of the latter. "Do you deſire," ſaid Socrates, "the reputation of a good muſician? The "only ſure way of obtaining it, is to be- "come a good muſician. Would you de- "ſire in the ſame manner to be thought "capable of ſerving your country either as "a general or as a ſtateſman? The beſt "way in this caſe too is really to acquire "the art and experience of war and "government, and to become really fit to "be a general or a ſtateſman. And in the "ſame manner if you would be reckoned "ſober, temperate, juſt, and equitable, the

" beſt way of acquiring this reputation is " to become ſober, temperate, juſt, and " equitable. If you can really render your- " ſelf amiable, reſpectable, and the proper " object of eſteem, there is no fear of your " not ſoon acquiring the love, the reſpect, " and eſteem of thoſe you live with." Since the practice of virtue, therefore, is in general ſo advantageous, and that of vice ſo contrary to our intereſt, the conſideration of thoſe oppoſite tendencies undoubtedly ſtamps an additional beauty and propriety upon the one, and a new deformity and impropriety upon the other. Temperance, magnanimity, juſtice, and beneficence, come thus to be approved of, not only under their proper characters, but under the additional character of the higheſt wiſdom and moſt real prudence. And in the ſame manner, the contrary vices of intemperance, puſillanimity, injuſtice, and either malevolence or ſordid ſelfiſhneſs, come to be diſapproved of, not only under their proper characters, but under the additional character of the moſt ſhort-ſighted folly and weakneſs. Epicurus appears in every virtue to

have

have attended to this ſpecies of propriety only. It is that which is moſt apt to occur to thoſe who are endeavouring to perſuade others to regularity of conduct. When men by their practice, and perhaps too by their maxims, manifeſtly ſhow that the natural beauty of virtue is not like to have much effect upon them, how is it poſſible to move them but by repreſenting the folly of their conduct, and how much they themſelves are in the end likely to ſuffer by it?

By running up all the different virtues too to this one ſpecies of propriety, Epicurus indulged a propenſity, which is natural to all men, but which philoſophers in particular are apt to cultivate with a peculiar fondneſs, as the great means of diſplaying their ingenuity, the propenſity to account for all appearances from as few principles as poſſible. And he, no doubt, indulged this propenſity ſtill further, when he referred all the primary objects of natural deſire and averſion to the pleaſures and pains of the body. The great patron of the atomical philoſo-

philoſophy, who took ſo much pleaſure in deducing all the powers and qualities of bodies from the moſt obvious and familiar, the figure, motion, and arrangement of the ſmall parts of matter, felt no doubt a ſimilar ſatisfaction, when he accounted, in the ſame manner, for all the ſentiments and paſſions of the mind from thoſe which are moſt obvious and familiar.

The ſyſtem of Epicurus agreed with thoſe of Plato, Ariſtotle, and Zeno, in making virtue conſiſt in acting in the moſt ſuitable manner to obtain * primary objects of natural deſire. It differed from all of them in two other reſpects; firſt, in the account which it gave of thoſe primary objects of natural deſire; and ſecondly, in the account which it gave of the excellence of virtue, or of the reaſon why that quality ought to be eſteemed.

The primary objects of natural deſire conſiſted, according to Epicurus, in bodily

* Prima naturæ.

pleaſure

pleaſure and pain, and in nothing elſe: whereas, according to the other three philoſophers, there were many other objects, ſuch as knowledge, ſuch as the happineſs of our relations, of our friends, of our country, which were ultimately deſirable for their own ſakes.

Virtue too, according to Epicurus, did not deſerve to be purſued for its own ſake, nor was itſelf one of the ultimate objects of natural appetite, but was eligible only upon account of its tendency to prevent pain and to procure eaſe and pleaſure. In the opinion of the other three, on the contrary, it was deſirable, not merely as the means of procuring the other primary objects of natural deſire, but as ſomething which was in itſelf more valuable than them all. Man, they thought, being born for action, his happineſs muſt conſiſt, not merely in the agreeableneſs of his paſſive ſenſations, but alſo in the propriety of his active exertions.

CHAP. III.

Of thoſe Syſtems which make Virtue conſiſt in Benevolence.

THE ſyſtem which makes virtue conſiſt in benevolence, though I think not ſo ancient as all of thoſe which I have already given an account of, is, however, of very great antiquity. It ſeems to have been the doctrine of the greater part of thoſe philoſophers who, about and after the age of Auguſtus, called themſelves Eclectics, who pretended to follow chiefly the opinions of Plato and Pythagoras, and who, upon that account, are commonly known by the name of the later Platoniſts.

In the divine nature, according to theſe authors, benevolence or love was the ſole principle of action, and directed the exertion of all the other attributes. The wiſdom of the Deity was employed in finding out

out the means for bringing about thoſe ends which his goodneſs ſuggeſted, as his infinite power was exerted to execute them. Benevolence, however, was ſtill the ſupreme and governing attribute, to which the others were ſubſervient, and from which the whole excellency, or the whole morality, if I may be allowed ſuch an expreſſion, of the divine operations, was ultimately derived. The whole perfection and virtue of the human mind conſiſted in ſome reſemblance or participation of the divine perfections, and, conſequently, in being filled with the ſame principle of benevolence and love which influenced all the actions of the Deity. The actions of men which flowed from this motive were alone truly praiſeworthy, or could claim any merit in the ſight of the Deity. It was by actions of charity and love only that we could imitate, as became us, the conduct of God, that we could expreſs our humble and devout admiration of his infinite perfections, that by foſtering in our own minds the ſame divine principle, we could bring our own affections to a greater reſemblance with his holy attributes,

butes, and thereby become more proper objects of his love and eſteem; till at laſt we arrived at that immediate converſe and communication with the Deity to which it was the great object of this philoſophy to raiſe us.

This ſyſtem, as it was much eſteemed by many ancient fathers of the Chriſtian church, ſo after the Reformation it was adopted by ſeveral divines of the moſt eminent piety and learning and of the moſt amiable manners; particularly, by Dr. Ralph Cudworth, by Dr. Henry More, and by Mr. John Smith of Cambridge. But of all the patrons of this ſyſtem, ancient or modern, the late Dr. Hutcheſon was undoubtedly, beyond all compariſon, the moſt acute, the moſt diſtinct, the moſt philoſophical, and, what is of the greateſt conſequence of all, the ſobereſt and moſt judicious.

That virtue conſiſts in benevolence is a notion ſupported by many appearances in human nature. It has been obſerved already, that proper benevolence is the moſt

graceful and agreeable of all the affections, that it is recommended to us by a double ſympathy, that as its tendency is neceſſarily beneficent, it is the proper object of gratitude and reward, and that upon all theſe accounts it appears to our natural ſentiments to poſſeſs a merit ſuperior to any other. It has been obſerved too, that even the weakneſſes of benevolence are not very diſagreeable to us, whereas thoſe of every other paſſion are always extremely diſguſting. Who does not abhor exceſſive malice, exceſſive ſelfiſhneſs, or exceſſive reſentment? But the moſt exceſſive indulgence even of partial friendſhip is not ſo offenſive. It is the benevolent paſſions only which can exert themſelves without any regard or attention to propriety, and yet retain ſomething about them which is engaging. There is ſomething pleaſing even in mere inſtinctive good-will which goes on to do good offices without once reflecting whether by this conduct it is the proper object either of blame or approbation. It is not ſo with the other paſſions. The moment they are deſerted, the moment they are unaccompanied by

by the ſenſe of propriety, they ceaſe to be agreeable.

As benevolence beſtows upon thoſe actions which proceed from it, a beauty ſuperior to all others, ſo the want of it, and much more the contrary inclination, communicates a peculiar deformity to whatever evidences ſuch a diſpoſition. Pernicious actions are often puniſhable for no other reaſon than becauſe they ſhew a want of ſufficient attention to the happineſs of our neighbour.

Beſides all this, Dr. Hutcheſon * obſerved, that whenever in any action, ſuppoſed to proceed from benevolent affections, ſome other motive had been diſcovered, our ſenſe of the merit of this action was juſt ſo far diminiſhed as this motive was believed to have influenced it. If an action, ſuppoſed to proceed from gratitude, ſhould be diſcovered to have ariſen from an expectation of ſome new favour, or if what was appre-

* See Inquiry concerning Virtue, ſect. 1. and 2.

hended

hended to proceed from public ſpirit, ſhould be found out to have taken its origin from the hope of a pecuniary reward, ſuch a diſcovery would entirely deſtroy all notion of merit or praiſe-worthineſs in either of theſe actions. Since, therefore, the mixture of any ſelfiſh motive, like that of a baſer alloy, diminiſhed or took away altogether the merit which would otherwiſe have belonged to any action, it was evident, he imagined, that virtue muſt conſiſt in pure and diſintereſted benevolence alone.

When thoſe actions, on the contrary, which are commonly ſuppoſed to proceed from a ſelfiſh motive, are diſcovered to have ariſen from a benevolent one, it greatly enhances our ſenſe of their merit. If we believed of any perſon that he endeavoured to advance his fortune from no other view but that of doing friendly offices, and of making proper returns to his benefactors, we ſhould only love and eſteem him the more. And this obſervation ſeemed ſtill more to confirm the concluſion, that it was

benevolence only which could ſtamp upon any action the character of virtue.

Laſt of all, what, he imagined, was an evident proof of the juſtneſs of this account of virtue, in all the diſputes of caſuiſts concerning the rectitude of conduct, the public good, he obſerved, was the ſtandard to which they conſtantly referred; thereby univerſally acknowledging that whatever tended to promote the happineſs of mankind was right and laudable and virtuous, and the contrary, wrong, blamable, and vicious. In the late debates about paſſive obedience and the right of reſiſtance, the ſole point in controverſy among men of ſenſe was, whether univerſal ſubmiſſion would probably be attended with greater evils than temporary inſurrections when privileges were invaded. Whether what, upon the whole, tended moſt to the happineſs of mankind, was not alſo morally good, was never once, he ſaid, made a queſtion.

Since benevolence, therefore, was the only motive which could beſtow upon any action

action the character of virtue, the greater the benevolence which was evidenced by any action, the greater the praiſe which muſt belong to it.

Thoſe actions which aimed at the happineſs of a great community, as they demonſtrated a more enlarged benevolence than thoſe which aimed only at that of a ſmaller ſyſtem, ſo were they, likewiſe, proportionally the more virtuous. The moſt virtuous of all affections, therefore, was that which embraced as its objects the happineſs of all intelligent beings. The leaſt virtuous, on the contrary, of thoſe to which the character of virtue could in any reſpect belong, was that which aimed no further than at the happineſs of an individual, ſuch as a ſon, a brother, a friend.

In directing all our actions to promote the greateſt poſſible good, in ſubmitting all inferior affections to the deſire of the general happineſs of mankind, in regarding one's ſelf but as one of the many, whoſe proſperity was to be purſued no further than

it was conſiſtent with, or conducive to that of the whole, conſiſted the perfection of virtue.

Self-love was a principle which could never be virtuous in any degree or in any direction. It was vicious whenever it obſtructed the general good. When it had no other effect than to make the individual take care of his own happineſs, it was merely innocent, and though it deſerved no praiſe, neither ought it to incur any blame. Thoſe benevolent actions which were performed, notwithſtanding ſome ſtrong motive from ſelf-intereſt, were the more virtuous upon that account. They demonſtrated the ſtrength and vigour of the benevolent principle.

Dr. Hutcheſon* was ſo far from allowing ſelf-love to be in any caſe a motive of virtuous actions, that even a regard to the pleaſure of ſelf-approbation, to the comfort-

* Inquiry concerning virtue, ſect. 2. art. 4. alſo Illuſtrations on the moral ſenſe, ſect. 5. laſt paragraph.

able

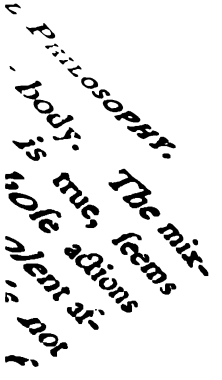
able applauſe of our own conſciences, according to him, diminiſhed the merit of a benevolent action. This was a ſelfiſh motive, he thought, which, ſo far as it contributed to any action, demonſtrated the weakneſs of that pure and diſintereſted benevolence which could alone ſtamp upon the conduct of man the character of virtue. In the common judgments of mankind, however, this regard to the approbation of our own minds is ſo far from being conſidered as what can in any reſpect diminiſh the virtue of any action, that it is rather looked upon as the ſole motive which deſerves the appellation of virtuous.

Such is the account given of the nature of virtue in this amiable ſyſtem, a ſyſtem which has a peculiar tendency to nouriſh and ſupport in the human heart the nobleſt and the moſt agreeable of all affections, and not only to check the injuſtice of ſelf-love, but in ſome meaſure to diſcourage that principle altogether, by repreſenting it as what could never reflect any honour upon thoſe who were influenced by it.

As ſome of the other ſyſtems which I have already given an account of, do not ſufficiently explain from whence ariſes the peculiar excellency of the ſupreme virtue of beneficence, ſo this ſyſtem ſeems to have the contrary defect, of not ſufficiently explaining from whence ariſes our approbation of the inferior virtues of prudence, vigilance, circumſpection, temperance, conſtancy, firmneſs. The view and aim of our affections, the beneficent and hurtful effects which they tend to produce, are the only qualities at all attended to in this ſyſtem. Their propriety and impropriety, their ſuitableneſs and unſuitableneſs, to the cauſe which excites them, are diſregarded altogether.

Regard to our own private happineſs and intereſt, too, appear upon many occaſions very laudable principles of action. The habits of œconomy, induſtry, diſcretion, attention and application of thought, are generally ſuppoſed to be cultivated from ſelf-intereſted motives, and at the ſame time are apprehended to be very praiſe-worthy qualities, which deſerve the eſteem and

and approbation of every body. The mixture of a ſelfiſh motive, it is true, ſeems often to ſully the beauty of thoſe actions which ought to ariſe from a benevolent affection. The cauſe of this, however, is not that ſelf-love can never be the motive of a virtuous action, but that the benevolent principle appears in this particular caſe to want its due degree of ſtrength, and to be altogether unſuitable to its object. The character, therefore, ſeems evidently imperfect, and upon the whole to deſerve blame rather than praiſe. The mixture of a benevolent motive in an action to which ſelf-love alone ought to be ſufficient to prompt us, is not ſo apt indeed to diminiſh our ſenſe of its propriety, or of the virtue of the perſon who performs it. We are not ready to ſuſpect any perſon of being defective in ſelfiſhneſs. This is by no means the weak ſide of human nature, or the failing of which we are apt to be ſuſpicious. If we could really believe, however, of any man, that, was it not from a regard to his family and friends, he would not take that proper care of his health, his life, or his for-



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The condition of human nature
are peculiarly hard, if thoſe affections, which, by the very nature of our being, ought frequently to influence our conduct, could upon no occaſion appear virtuous, or deſerve eſteem and commendation from any body.

Thoſe three ſyſtems, that which places virtue in propriety, that which places it in prudence, and that which makes it conſiſt in benevolence, are the principal accounts which have been given of the nature of virtue. To one or other of them, all the other deſcriptions of virtue, how differ-

ent

tune, to which ſelf-preſervation alone ought to be ſufficient to prompt him, it would undoubtedly be a failing, though one of thoſe amiable failings which render a perſon rather the object of pity than of contempt or hatred. It would ſtill, however, ſomewhat diminiſh the dignity and reſpectableneſs of his character. Careleſſneſs and want of œconomy are univerſally diſapproved of, not, however, as proceeding from a want of benevolence, but from a want of the proper attention to the objects of ſelf-intereſt.

Though the ſtandard by which caſuiſts frequently determine what is right or wrong in human conduct, be its tendency to the welfare or diſorder of ſociety, it does not follow that a regard to the welfare of ſociety ſhould be the ſole virtuous motive of action, but only that, in any competition, it ought to caſt the balance againſt all other motives.

Benevolence may, perhaps, be the ſole principle of action in the Deity, and there are

are ſeveral, not improbable, arguments which tend to perſuade us that it is ſo. It is not eaſy to conceive what other motive an independent and all-perfect Being, who ſtands in need of nothing external, and whoſe happineſs is complete in himſelf, can act from. But whatever may be the caſe with the Deity, ſo imperfect a creature as man, the ſupport of whoſe exiſtence requires ſo many things external to him, muſt often act from many other motives. The condition of human nature were peculiarly hard, if thoſe affections, which, by the very nature of our being, ought frequently to influence our conduct, could upon no occaſion appear virtuous, or deſerve eſteem and commendation from any body.

Thoſe three ſyſtems, that which places virtue in propriety, that which places it in prudence, and that which makes it conſiſt in benevolence, are the principal accounts which have been given of the nature of virtue. To one or other of them, all the other deſcriptions of virtue, how different

ent ſoever they may appear, are eaſily reducible.

That ſyſtem which places virtue in obedience to the will of the Deity, may be counted either among thoſe which make it conſiſt in prudence, or among thoſe which make it conſiſt in propriety. When it is aſked, why we ought to obey the will of the Deity, this queſtion, which would be impious and abſurd in the higheſt degree if aſked from any doubt that we ought to obey him, can admit but of two different anſwers. It muſt either be ſaid that we ought to obey the will of the Deity becauſe he is a Being of infinite power, who will reward us eternally if we do ſo, and puniſh us eternally if we do otherwiſe: or it muſt be ſaid, that independent of any regard to our own happineſs, or to rewards and puniſhments of any kind, there is a congruity and fitneſs that a creature ſhould obey its creator, that a limited and imperfect being ſhould ſubmit to one of infinite and incomprehenſible perfections. Beſides one or other of theſe two, it is impoſſible to

conceive that any other anſwer can be given to this queſtion. If the firſt anſwer be the proper one, virtue conſiſts in prudence, or in the proper purſuit of our own final intereſt and happineſs; ſince it is upon this account that we are obliged to obey the will of the Deity. If the ſecond anſwer be the proper one, virtue muſt conſiſt in propriety, ſince the ground of our obligation to obedience is the ſuitableneſs or congruity of the ſentiments of humility and ſubmiſſion to the ſuperiority of the object which excites them.

That ſyſtem which places virtue in utility, coincides too with that which makes it conſiſt in propriety. According to this ſyſtem, all thoſe qualities of the mind which are agreeable or advantageous, either to the perſon himſelf or to others, are approved of as virtuous, and the contrary diſapproved of as vicious. But the agreeableneſs or utility of any affection depends upon the degree which it is allowed to ſubſiſt in. Every affection is uſeful when it is confined to a certain degree of moderation; and

and every affection is diſadvantageous when it exceeds the proper bounds. According to this ſyſtem therefore, virtue conſiſts not in any one affection, but in the proper degree of all the affections. The only difference between it and that which I have been endeavouring to eſtabliſh, is, that it makes utility, and not ſympathy, or the correſpondent affection of the ſpectator, the natural and original meaſure of this proper degree.

CHAP. IV.

Of licentious Syſtems.

ALL thoſe ſyſtems, which I have hitherto given an account of, ſuppoſe that there is a real and eſſential diſtinction between vice and virtue, whatever theſe qualities may conſiſt in. There is a real and eſſential difference between the propriety and impropriety of any affection, between bene-

benevolence and any other principle of action, between real prudence and ſhort-ſighted folly or precipitate raſhneſs. In the main too all of them contribute to encourage the praiſe-worthy, and to diſcourage the blamable diſpoſition.

It may be true, perhaps, of ſome of them, that they tend, in ſome meaſure, to break the balance of the affections, and to give the mind a particular bias to ſome principles of action, beyond the proportion that is due to them. The ancient ſyſtems, which place virtue in propriety, ſeem chiefly to recommend the great, the awful, and the reſpectable virtues, the virtues of ſelf-government and ſelf-command; fortitude, magnanimity, independency upon fortune, the contempt of all outward accidents, of pain, poverty, exile, and death. It is in theſe great exertions that the nobleſt propriety of conduct is diſplayed. The ſoft, the amiable, the gentle virtues, all the virtues of indulgent humanity, are, in compariſon, but little inſiſted upon, and ſeem, on the

the contrary, by the Stoics in particular, to have been often regarded as mere weakneſſes which it behoved a wiſe man not to harbour in his breaſt.

The benevolent ſyſtem, on the other hand, while it foſters and encourages all thoſe milder virtues in the higheſt degree, ſeems entirely to neglect the more lawful and reſpectable qualities of the mind. It even denies them the appellation of virtues. It calls them moral abilities, and treats them as qualities which do not deſerve the ſame ſort of eſteem and approbation, that is due to what is properly denominated virtue. All thoſe principles of action which aim only at our own intereſt, it treats, if that be poſſible, ſtill worſe. So far from having any merit of their own, they diminiſh, it pretends, the merit of benevolence, when they cooperate with it: and prudence, it is aſſerted, when employed only in promoting private intereſt, can never even be imagined a virtue.

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That ſyſtem, again, which makes virtue conſiſt in prudence only, while it gives the higheſt encouragement to the habits of caution, vigilance, ſobriety, and judicious moderation, ſeems to degrade equally both the amiable and reſpectable virtues, and to ſtrip the former of all their beauty, and the latter of all their grandeur.

But notwithſtanding theſe defects, the general tendency of each of thoſe three ſyſtems is to encourage the beſt and moſt laudable habits of the human mind: and it were well for ſociety, if, either mankind in general, or even thoſe few who pretend to live according to any philoſophical rule, were to regulate their conduct by the precepts of any one of them. We may learn from each of them ſomething that is both valuable and peculiar. If it was poſſible, by precept and exhortation, to inſpire the mind with fortitude and magnanimity, the ancient ſyſtems of propriety would ſeem ſufficient to do this. Or if it was poſſible, by the ſame means, to ſoften it into humanity, and to awaken the affections of kind-

kindneſs and general love towards thoſe we live with, ſome of the pictures with which the benevolent ſyſtem preſents us, might ſeem capable of producing this effect. We may learn from the ſyſtem of Epicurus, though undoubtedly the moſt imperfect of all the three, how much the practice of both the amiable and reſpectable virtues is conducive to our own intereſt, to our own eaſe and ſafety and quiet even in this life. As Epicurus placed happineſs in the attainment of eaſe and ſecurity, he exerted himſelf in a particular manner to ſhow that virtue was, not merely the beſt and the ſureſt, but the only means of acquiring thoſe invaluable poſſeſſions. The good effects of virtue, upon our inward tranquillity and peace of mind, are what other philoſophers have chiefly celebrated. Epicurus, without neglecting this topic, has chiefly inſiſted upon the influence of that amiable quality on our outward proſperity and ſafety. It was upon this account that his writings were ſo much ſtudied in the ancient world by men of all different philoſophical parties. It is from him that Cicero, the great

great enemy of the Epicurean ſyſtem, borrows his moſt agreeable proofs that virtue alone is ſufficient to ſecure happineſs. Seneca, though a Stoic, the ſect moſt oppoſite to that of Epicurus, yet quotes this philoſopher more frequently than any other.

There is, however, another ſyſtem which ſeems to take away altogether the diſtinction between vice and virtue, and of which the tendency is, upon that account, wholly pernicious: I mean the ſyſtem of Dr. Mandeville. Though the notions of this author are in almoſt every reſpect erroneous, there are, however, ſome appearances in human nature, which, when viewed in a certain manner, ſeem at firſt ſight to favour them. Theſe, deſcribed and exaggerated by the lively and humorous, though coarſe and ruſtic eloquence of Dr. Mandeville, have thrown upon his doctrines an air of truth and probability which is very apt to impoſe upon the unſkilful.

Dr. Mandeville conſiders whatever is done from a ſenſe of propriety, from a regard to what is commendable and praiſeworthy, as being done from a love of praiſe and commendation, or as he calls it from vanity. Man, he obſerves, is naturally much more intereſted in his own happineſs than in that of others, and it is impoſſible that in his heart he can ever really prefer their proſperity to his own. Whenever he appears to do ſo, we may be aſſured that he impoſes upon us, and that he is then acting from the ſame ſelfiſh motives as at all other times. Among his other ſelfiſh paſſions, vanity is one of the ſtrongeſt, and he is always eaſily flattered and greatly delighted with the applauſes of thoſe about him. When he appears to ſacrifice his own intereſt to that of his companions, he knows that this conduct will be highly agreeable to their ſelf-love, and that they will not fail to expreſs their ſatisfaction by beſtowing upon him the moſt extravagant praiſes. The pleaſure which he expects from this, over-balances, in his opinion, the

the intereſt which he abandons in order to procure it. His conduct, therefore, upon this occaſion, is in reality juſt as ſelfiſh, and ariſes from juſt as mean a motive as upon any other. He is flattered, however, and he flatters himſelf with the belief that it is entirely diſintereſted; ſince, unleſs this was ſuppoſed, it would not ſeem to merit any commendation either in his own eyes or in thoſe of others. All public ſpirit, therefore, all preference of public to private intereſt, is, according to him, a mere cheat and impoſition upon mankind; and that human virtue which is ſo much boaſted of, and which is the occaſion of ſo much emulation among men, is the mere offspring of flattery begot upon pride.

Whether the moſt generous and public-ſpirited actions may not, in ſome ſenſe, be regarded as proceeding from ſelf-love, I ſhall not at preſent examine. The deciſion of this queſtion is not, I apprehend, of any importance towards eſtabliſhing the reality of virtue, ſince ſelf-love may frequently be a virtuous motive of action. I

ſhall only endeavour to ſhow that the deſire of doing what is honourable and noble, of rendering ourſelves the proper objects of eſteem and approbation, cannot with any propriety be called vanity. Even the love of well-grounded fame and reputation, the deſire of acquiring eſteem by what is really eſtimable, does not deſerve that name. The firſt is the love of virtue, the nobleſt and the beſt paſſion of human nature. The ſecond is the love of true glory, a paſſion inferior no doubt to the former, but which in dignity appears to come immediately after it. He is guilty of vanity who deſires praiſe for qualities which are either not praiſe-worthy in any degree, or not in that degree in which he expects to be praiſed for them; who ſets his character upon the frivolous ornaments of dreſs and equipage, or upon the equally frivolous accompliſhments of ordinary behaviour. He is guilty of vanity who deſires praiſe for what indeed very well deſerves it, but what he perfectly knows does not belong to him. The empty coxcomb who gives himſelf airs of importance which he has no title

to,

to, the ſilly liar who aſſumes the merit of adventures which never happened, the fooliſh plagiary who gives himſelf out for the author of what he has no pretenſions to, are properly accuſed of this paſſion. He too is ſaid to be guilty of vanity who is not contented with the ſilent ſentiments of eſteem and approbation, who ſeems to be fonder of their noiſy expreſſions and acclamations than of the ſentiments themſelves, who is never ſatisfied but when his own praiſes are ringing in his ears, and who ſolicits with the moſt anxious importunity all external marks of reſpect, is fond of titles, of compliments, of being viſited, of being attended, of being taken notice of in public places with the appearance of deference and attention. This frivolous paſſion is altogether different from either of the two former, and is the paſſion of the loweſt and the leaſt of mankind, as they are of the nobleſt and the greateſt.

But though theſe three paſſions, the deſire of rendering ourſelves the proper objects of honour and eſteem; or of becom-

ing what is honourable and eſtimable; the deſire of acquiring honour and eſteem, by really deſerving thoſe ſentiments; and the frivolous deſire of praiſe at any rate, are widely different; though the two former are always approved of, while the latter never fails to be deſpiſed; there is, however, a certain remote affinity among them, which, exaggerated by the humorous and diverting eloquence of this lively author, has enabled him to impoſe upon his readers. There is an affinity between vanity and the love of true glory, as both theſe paſſions aim at acquiring eſteem and approbation. But they are different in this, that the one is a juſt, reaſonable, and equitable paſſion, while the other is unjuſt, abſurd, and ridiculous. The man who deſires eſteem for what is really eſtimable, deſires nothing but what he is juſtly entitled to, and what cannot be refuſed him without ſome ſort of injury. He, on the contrary, who deſires it upon any other terms, demands what he has no juſt claim to. The firſt is eaſily ſatisfied, is not apt to be jealous or ſuſpicious that we do not eſteem him enough, and is ſeldom ſolicit-

ſolicitous about receiving many external marks of our regard. The other, on the contrary, is never to be ſatisfied, is full of jealouſy and ſuſpicion that we do not eſteem him ſo much as he deſires, becauſe he has ſome ſecret conſciouſneſs that he deſires more than he deſerves. The leaſt neglect of ceremony, he conſiders as a mortal affront, and as an expreſſion of the moſt determined contempt. He is reſtleſs and impatient, and perpetually afraid that we have loſt all reſpect for him, and is upon this account always anxious to obtain new expreſſions of eſteem, and cannot be kept in temper but by continual attendance and adulation.

There is an affinity too between the deſire of becoming what is honourable and eſtimable, and the deſire of honour and eſteem, between the love of virtue and the love of true glory. They reſemble one another not only in this reſpect, that both aim at really being what is honourable and noble, but even in that reſpect in which the love of true glory reſembles what is proper-

ly called vanity, ſome reference to the ſentiments of others. The man of the greateſt magnanimity, who deſires virtue for its own ſake, and is moſt indifferent about what actually are the opinions of mankind with regard to him, is ſtill, however, delighted with the thoughts of what they ſhould be, with the conſciouſneſs that though he may neither be honoured nor applauded, he is ſtill the proper object of honour and applauſe, and that if mankind were cool and candid and conſiſtent with themſelves, and properly informed of the motives and circumſtances of his conduct, they would not fail to honour and applaud him. Though he deſpiſes the opinions which are actually entertained of him, he has the higheſt value for thoſe which ought to be entertained of him. That he might think himſelf worthy of thoſe honourable ſentiments, and, whatever was the idea which other men might conceive of his character, that when he ſhould put himſelf in their ſituation, and conſider, not what was, but what ought to be their opinion, he ſhould always have the higheſt idea of it himſelf,

himſelf, was the great and exalted motive of his conduct. As even in the love of virtue, therefore, there is ſtill ſome reference, though not to what is, yet to what in reaſon and propriety ought to be, the opinion of others, there is even in this reſpect ſome affinity between it, and the love of true glory. There is, however, at the ſame time, a very great difference between them. The man who acts ſolely from a regard to what is right and fit to be done, from a regard to what is the proper object of eſteem and approbation, though theſe ſentiments ſhould never be beſtowed upon him, acts from the moſt ſublime and godlike motive which human nature is even capable of conceiving. The man, on the other hand, who while he deſires to merit approbation is at the ſame time anxious to obtain it, though he too is laudable in the main, yet his motives have a greater mixture of human infirmity. He is in danger of being mortified by the ignorance and injuſtice of mankind, and his happineſs is expoſed to the envy of his rivals and the folly of the public. The happineſs of the other, on the contrary, is altogether

ſecure

ſecure and independent of fortune, and of the caprice of thoſe he lives with. The contempt and hatred which may be thrown upon him by the ignorance of mankind, he conſiders as not belonging to him, and is not at all mortified by it. Mankind deſpiſe and hate him from a falſe notion of his character and conduct. If they knew him better, they would eſteem and love him. It is not him whom, properly ſpeaking, they hate and deſpiſe, but another perſon whom they miſtake him to be. Our friend, whom we ſhould meet at a maſquerade in the garb of our enemy, would be more diverted than mortified, if under that diſguiſe we ſhould vent our indignation againſt him. Such are the ſentiments of a man of real magnanimity, when expoſed to unjuſt cenſure. It ſeldom happens, however, that human nature arrives at this degree of firmneſs. Though none but the weakeſt and moſt worthleſs of mankind are much delighted with falſe glory, yet, by a ſtrange inconſiſtency, falſe ignominy is often capable of mortifying thoſe who appear the moſt reſolute and determined.

Dr.

Dr. Mandeville is not ſatisfied with repreſenting the frivolous motive of vanity, as the ſource of all thoſe actions which are commonly accounted virtuous. He endeavours to point out the imperfection of human virtue in many other reſpects. In every caſe, he pretends, it falls ſhort of that complete ſelf-denial which it pretends to, and, inſtead of a conqueſt, is commonly no more than a concealed indulgence of our paſſions. Wherever our reſerve with regard to pleaſure falls ſhort of the moſt aſcetic abſtinence, he treats it as groſs luxury and ſenſuality. Every thing, according to him, is luxury which exceeds what is abſolutely neceſſary for the ſupport of human nature, ſo that there is vice even in the uſe of a clean ſhirt, or of a convenient habitation. The indulgence of the inclination to ſex, in the moſt lawful union, he conſiders as the ſame ſenſuality with the moſt hurtful gratification of that paſſion, and derides that temperance and that chaſtity which can be practiſed at ſo cheap a rate. The ingenious ſophiſtry of his reaſoning, is here, as upon many other occaſions, covered by the ambiguity

biguity of language. There are ſome of our paſſions which have no other names except thoſe which mark the diſagreeable and offenſive degree. The ſpectator is more apt to take notice of them in this degree than in any other. When they ſhock his own ſentiments, when they give him ſome ſort of antipathy and uneaſineſs, he is neceſſarily obliged to attend to them, and is from thence naturally led to give them a name. When they fall in with the natural ſtate of his own mind, he is very apt to overlook them altogether, and either gives them no name at all, or, if he give them any, it is one which marks rather the ſubjection and reſtraint of the paſſion, than the degree which it ſtill is allowed to ſubſiſt in, after it is ſo ſubjected and reſtrained. Thus the common names* of the love of pleaſure, and of the love of ſex, denote a vicious and offenſive degree of thoſe paſſions. The words temperance and chaſtity, on the other hand, ſeem to mark rather the reſtraint and ſubjection which they are kept under, than the degree which they are ſtill

* Luxury and luſt.

allowed

allowed to ſubſiſt in. When he can ſhow, therefore, that they ſtill ſubſiſt in ſome degree, he imagines, he has entirely demoliſhed the reality of the virtues of temperance and chaſtity, and ſhown them to be mere impoſitions upon the inattention and ſimplicity of mankind. Thoſe virtues, however, do not require an entire inſenſibility to the objects of the paſſions which they mean to govern. They only aim at reſtraining the violence of thoſe paſſions ſo far as not to hurt the individual, and neither diſturb nor offend the ſociety.

It is the great fallacy of Dr. Mandeville's book * to repreſent every paſſion as wholly vicious, which is ſo in any degree and in any direction. It is thus that he treats every thing as vanity which has any reference, either to what are, or to what ought to be the ſentiments of others: and it is by means of this ſophiſtry, that he eſtabliſhes his favourite concluſion, that private vices are public benefits. If the love of magnificence, a taſte for the elegant arts and im-

* Fable of the Bees.

provements

provements of human life, for whatever is agreeable in dreſs, furniture, or equipage, for architecture, ſtatuary, painting, and muſic, is to be regarded as luxury, ſenſuality, and oſtentation, even in thoſe whoſe ſituation allows, without any inconveniency, the indulgence of thoſe paſſions, it is certain that luxury, ſenſuality, and oſtentation are public benefits: ſince without the qualities upon which he thinks proper to beſtow ſuch opprobrious names, the arts of refinement could never find encouragement, and muſt languiſh for want of employment. Some popular aſcetic doctrines which had been current before his time, and which placed virtue in the entire extirpation and annihilation of all our paſſions, were the real foundation of this licentious ſyſtem. It was eaſy for Dr. Mandeville to prove, firſt, that this entire conqueſt never actually took place among men; and ſecondly, that, if it was to take place univerſally, it would be pernicious to ſociety, by putting an end to all induſtry and commerce, and in a manner to the whole buſineſs of human life. By the firſt of theſe propoſitions he ſeemed to

to prove that there was no real virtue, and that what pretended to be ſuch, was a mere cheat and impoſition upon mankind; and by the ſecond, that private vices were public benefits, ſince without them no ſociety could proſper or flouriſh.

Such is the ſyſtem of Dr. Mandeville, which once made ſo much noiſe in the world, and which, though, perhaps, it never gave occaſion to more vice than what would have been without it, at leaſt taught that vice, which aroſe from other cauſes, to appear with more effrontery, and to avow the corruption of its motives with a profligate audaciouſneſs which had never been heard of before.

But how deſtructive ſoever this ſyſtem may appear, it could never have impoſed upon ſo great a number of perſons, nor have occaſioned ſo general an alarm among thoſe who are the friends of better principles, had it not in ſome reſpects bordered upon the truth. A ſyſtem of natural philoſophy may appear very plauſible, and be for

for a long time very generally received in the world, and yet have no foundation in nature, nor any ſort of reſemblance to the truth. The vortices of Des Cartes were regarded by a very ingenious nation, for near a century together, as a moſt ſatisfactory account of the revolutions of the heavenly bodies. Yet it has been demonſtrated, to the conviction of all mankind, that theſe pretended cauſes of thoſe wonderful effects, not only do not actually exiſt, but are utterly impoſſible, and if they did exiſt could produce no ſuch effects as are aſcribed to them. But it is otherwiſe with ſyſtems of moral philoſophy, and an author who pretends to account for the origin of our moral ſentiments, cannot deceive us ſo groſsly, nor depart ſo very far from all reſemblance to the truth. When a traveller gives an account of ſome diſtant country, he may impoſe upon our credulity the moſt groundleſs and abſurd fictions as the moſt certain matters of fact. But when a perſon pretends to inform us of what paſſes in our neighbourhood, and of the affairs of the very pariſh which we live in, though

here too, if we are ſo careleſs as not to examine things with our own eyes, he may deceive us in many reſpects, yet the greateſt falſehoods which he impoſes upon us muſt bear ſome reſemblance to the truth, and muſt even have a conſiderable mixture of truth in them. An author who treats of natural philoſophy, and pretends to aſſign the cauſes of the great phænomena of the univerſe, pretends to give an account of the affairs of a very diſtant country, concerning which he may tell us what he pleaſes, and as long as his narration keeps within the bounds of ſeeming poſſibility, he need not deſpair of gaining our belief. But when he propoſes to explain the origin of our deſires and affections, of our ſentiments of approbation and diſapprobation, he pretends to give an account, not only of the affairs of the very pariſh that we live in, but of our own domeſtic concerns. Though here too, like indolent maſters who put their truſt in a ſteward who deceives them, we are very liable to be impoſed upon, yet we are incapable of paſſing any account which does not preſerve ſome little regard

to the truth. Some of the articles, at leaſt, muſt be juſt, and even thoſe which are moſt overcharged muſt have had ſome foundation, otherwiſe the fraud would be detected even by that careleſs inſpection which we are diſpoſed to give. The author who ſhould aſſign, as the cauſe of any natural ſentiment, ſome principle which neither had any connexion with it, nor reſembled any other principle which had ſome ſuch connexion, would appear abſurd and ridiculous to the moſt injudicious and unexperienced reader.

SECTION III.

Of the different Syſtems which have been formed concerning the Principle of Approbation.

INTRODUCTION.

After the inquiry concerning the nature of virtue, the next queſtion of importance in Moral Philoſophy, is concerning the principle of approbation, concerning the power or faculty of the mind which renders certain characters agreeable or diſagreeable to us, makes us prefer one tenour of conduct to another, denominate the one right and the other wrong, and conſider the one as the object of approbation, honour, and reward; the other as that of blame, cenſure, and puniſhment.

Three different accounts have been given of this principle of approbation. Accord-

ing to ſome, we approve and diſapprove both of our own actions and of thoſe of others, from ſelf-love only, or from ſome view of their tendency to our own happineſs or diſadvantage: according to others, reaſon, the ſame faculty by which we diſtinguiſh between truth and falſehood, enables us to diſtinguiſh between what is fit and unfit both in actions and affections: according to others this diſtinction is altogether the effect of immediate ſentiment and feeling, and ariſes from the ſatisfaction or diſguſt with which the view of certain actions or affections inſpires us. Self-love, reaſon, and ſentiment, therefore, are the three different ſources which have been aſſigned for the principle of approbation.

Before I proceed to give an account of thoſe different ſyſtems, I muſt obſerve, that the determination of this ſecond queſtion, though of the greateſt importance in ſpeculation, is of none in practice. The queſtion concerning the nature of virtue neceſſarily has ſome influence upon our notions of right and wrong in many particular caſes.

caſes. That concerning the principle of approbation can poſſibly have no ſuch effect. To examine from what contrivance or mechaniſm within, thoſe different notions or ſentiments ariſe, is a mere matter of philoſophical curioſity.

CHAP. I.

Of thoſe Syſtems which deduce the Principle of Approbation from Self-Love.

THOSE who account for the principle of approbation from ſelf-love, do not all account for it in the ſame manner, and there is a good deal of confuſion and inaccuracy in all their different ſyſtems. According to Mr. Hobbes, and many of his followers*, man is driven to take refuge in ſociety, not by any natural love which he bears to his own kind, but becauſe without the aſſiſt-

* Puffendorff, Mandeville.

ance of others he is incapable of ſubſiſting with eaſe or ſafety. Society, upon this account, becomes neceſſary to him, and whatever tends to its ſupport and welfare, he conſiders as having a remote tendency to his own intereſt; and, on the contrary, whatever is likely to diſturb or deſtroy it, he regards as in ſome meaſure hurtful or pernicious to himſelf. Virtue is the great ſupport and vice the great diſturber of human ſociety. The former, therefore, is agreeable and the latter offenſive to every man; as from the one he foreſees the proſperity, and from the other the ruin and diſorder of what is ſo neceſſary for the comfort and ſecurity of his exiſtence.

That the tendency of virtue to promote, and of vice to diſturb the order of ſociety, when we conſider it coolly and philoſophically, reflects a very great beauty upon the one, and a very great deformity upon the other, cannot, as I have obſerved upon a former occaſion, be called in queſtion. Human ſociety, when we contemplate it in a certain abſtract and philoſophical

phical light, appears like a great, an immenſe machine, whoſe regular and harmonious movements produce a thouſand agreeable effects. As in any other beautiful and noble machine that was the production of human art, whatever tended to render its movements more ſmooth and eaſy, would derive a beauty from this effect, and, on the contrary, whatever tended to obſtruct them would diſpleaſe upon that account: ſo virtue, which is, as it were, the fine poliſh to the wheels of ſociety, neceſſarily pleaſes; while vice, like the vile ruſt, which makes them jar and grate upon one another, is as neceſſarily offenſive. This account, therefore, of the origin of approbation and diſapprobation, ſo far as it derives them from a regard to the order of ſociety, runs into that principle which gives beauty to utility, and which I have explained upon a former occaſion; and it is from thence that this ſyſtem derives all that appearance of probability which it poſſeſſes. When thoſe authors deſcribe the innumerable advantages of a cultivated and ſocial, above a ſavage and ſolitary life; when they expa-

tiate upon the neceſſity of virtue and good order for the maintenance of the one, and demonſtrate how infallibly the prevalence of vice and diſobedience to the laws tend to bring back the other, the reader is charmed with the novelty and grandeur of thoſe views which they open to him: he ſees plainly a new beauty in virtue, and a new deformity in vice, which he had never taken notice of before, and is commonly ſo delighted with the diſcovery, that he ſeldom takes time to reflect, that this political view having never occurred to him in his life before, cannot poſſibly be the ground of that approbation and diſapprobation with which he has always been accuſtomed to conſider thoſe different qualities.

When thoſe authors, on the other hand, deduce from ſelf-love the intereſt which we take in the welfare of ſociety, and the eſteem which upon that account we beſtow upon virtue, they do not mean, that when we in this age applaud the virtue of Cato, and deteſt the villany of Catiline, our ſentiments are influenced by the notion of any benefit

benefit we receive from the one, or of any detriment we ſuffer from the other. It was not becauſe the proſperity or ſubverſion of ſociety, in thoſe remote ages and nations, was apprehended to have any influence upon our happineſs or miſery in the preſent times; that according to thoſe philoſophers, we eſteemed the virtuous, and blamed the diſorderly character. They never imagined that our ſentiments were influenced by any benefit or damage which we ſuppoſed actually to redound to us, from either; but by that which might have redounded to us, had we lived in thoſe diſtant ages and countries; or by that which might ſtill redound to us, if in our own times we ſhould meet with characters of the ſame kind. The idea, in ſhort, which thoſe authors were groping about, but which they were never able to unfold diſtinctly, was that indirect ſympathy which we feel with the gratitude or reſentment of thoſe who received the benefit or ſuffered the damage reſulting from ſuch oppoſite characters: and it was this which they were indiſtinctly pointing at, when they ſaid, that it was not the thought of what

what we had gained or ſuffered which prompted our applauſe or indignation, but the conception or imagination of what we might gain or ſuffer if we were to act in ſociety with ſuch aſſociates.

Sympathy, however, cannot, in any ſenſe, be regarded as a ſelfiſh principle. When I ſympathize with your ſorrow or your indignation, it may be pretended, indeed, that my emotion is founded in ſelf-love, becauſe it ariſes from bringing your caſe home to myſelf, from putting myſelf in your ſituation, and thence conceiving what I ſhould feel in the like circumſtances. But though ſympathy is very properly ſaid to ariſe from an imaginary change of ſituations with the perſon principally concerned, yet this imaginary change is not ſuppoſed to happen to me in my own perſon and character, but in that of the perſon with whom I ſympathize. When I condole with you for the loſs of your only ſon, in order to enter into your grief I do not conſider what I, a perſon of ſuch a character and profeſſion, ſhould ſuffer, if I had a ſon,

and

and if that ſon was unfortunately to die: but I conſider what I ſhould ſuffer if I was really you, and I not only change circumſtances with you, but I change perſons and characters. My grief, therefore, is entirely upon your account, and not in the leaſt upon my own. It is not, therefore, in the leaſt ſelfiſh. How can that be regarded as a ſelfiſh paſſion, which does not ariſe even from the imagination of any thing that has befallen, or that relates to myſelf, in my own proper perſon and character, but which is entirely occupied about what relates to you? A man may ſympathize with a woman in child-bed; though it is impoſſible that he ſhould conceive himſelf as ſuffering her pains in his own proper perſon and character. That whole account of human nature, however, which deduces all ſentiments and affections from ſelf-love, which has made ſo much noiſe in the world, but which, ſo far as I know, has never yet been fully and diſtinctly explained, ſeems to me to have ariſen from ſome confuſed miſapprehenſion of the ſyſtem of ſympathy.

CHAP. II.

Of thoſe Syſtems which make Reaſon the Principle of Approbation.

IT is well known to have been the doctrine of Mr. Hobbes, that a ſtate of nature is a ſtate of war; and that antecedent to the inſtitution of civil government, there could be no ſafe or peaceable ſociety among men. To preſerve ſociety, therefore, according to him, was to ſupport civil government, and to deſtroy civil government was the ſame thing as to put an end to ſociety. But the exiſtence of civil government depends upon the obedience that is paid to the ſupreme magiſtrate. The moment he loſes his authority, all government is at an end. As ſelf-preſervation, therefore, teaches men to applaud whatever tends to promote the welfare of ſociety, and to blame whatever is likely to hurt it; ſo the ſame

ſame principle, if they would think and ſpeak conſiſtently, ought to teach them to applaud upon all occaſions obedience to the civil magiſtrate, and to blame all diſobedience and rebellion. The very ideas of laudable and blamable, ought to be the ſame with thoſe of obedience, and diſobedience. The laws of the civil magiſtrate, therefore, ought to be regarded as the ſole ultimate ſtandards of what was juſt and unjuſt, of what was right and wrong.

It was the avowed intention of Mr. Hobbes, by propagating theſe notions, to ſubject the conſciences of men immediately to the civil, and not to the eccleſiaſtical powers, whoſe turbulence and ambition, he had been taught, by the example of his own times, to regard as the principal ſource of the diſorders of ſociety. His doctrine, upon this account, was peculiarly offenſive to theologians, who accordingly did not fail to vent their indignation againſt him with great aſperity and bitterneſs. It was likewiſe offenſive to all ſound moraliſts, as it ſuppoſed that there was no natural diſtinction

tinction between right and wrong, that theſe were mutable and changeable, and depended upon the mere arbitrary will of the civil magiſtrate. This account of things, therefore, was attacked from all quarters and by all ſorts of weapons, by ſober reaſon as well as by furious declamation.

In order to confute ſo odious a doctrine, it was neceſſary to prove, that antecedent to all law or poſitive inſtitution, the mind was naturally endowed with a faculty, by which it diſtinguiſhed in certain actions and affections, the qualities of right, laudable, and virtuous, and in others thoſe of wrong, blamable, and vicious.

Law, it was juſtly obſerved by Dr. Cudworth*, could not be the original ſource of thoſe diſtinctions; ſince, upon the ſuppoſition of ſuch a law, it muſt either be right to obey it, and wrong to diſobey it, or indifferent whether we obeyed it, or diſobeyed it. That law which it was indifferent

* Immutable Morality, l. i.

whether

whether we obeyed or diſobeyed, could not, it was evident, be the ſource of thoſe diſtinctions; neither could that which it was right to obey and wrong to diſobey, ſince even this ſtill ſuppoſed the antecedent notions or ideas of right and wrong, and that obedience to the law was conformable to the idea of right, and diſobedience to that of wrong.

Since the mind, therefore, had a notion of thoſe diſtinctions antecedent to all law, it ſeemed neceſſarily to follow, that it derived this notion from reaſon, which pointed out the difference between right and wrong, in the ſame manner in which it did that between truth and falſehood: and this concluſion, which, though true in ſome reſpects, is rather haſty in others, was more eaſily received at a time when the abſtract ſcience of human nature was but in its infancy, and before the diſtinct offices and powers of the different faculties of the human mind had been carefully examined and diſtinguiſhed from one another. When this controverſy with Mr. Hobbes was

carried on with the greateſt warmth and keenneſs, no other faculty had been thought of from which any ſuch ideas could poſſibly be ſuppoſed to ariſe. It became at this time, therefore, the popular doctrine, that the eſſence of virtue and vice did not conſiſt in the conformity or diſagreement of human actions with the law of a ſuperior, but in their conformity or diſagreement with reaſon, which was thus conſidered as the original ſource and principle of approbation and diſapprobation.

That virtue conſiſts in conformity to reaſon, is true in ſome reſpects, and this faculty may very juſtly be conſidered as, in ſome ſenſe, the ſource and principle of approbation and diſapprobation, and of all ſolid judgments concerning right and wrong. It is by reaſon that we diſcover thoſe general rules of juſtice by which we ought to regulate our actions: and it is by the ſame faculty that we form thoſe more vague and indeterminate ideas of what is prudent, of what is decent, of what is generous or noble, which we carry conſtantly about

about with us, and according to which we endeavour, as well as we can, to model the tenor of our conduct. The general maxims of morality are formed, like all other general maxims, from experience and induction. We obſerve in a great variety of particular caſes what pleaſes or diſpleaſes our moral faculties, what theſe approve or diſapprove of, and, by induction from this experience, we eſtabliſh thoſe general rules. But induction is always regarded as one of the operations of reaſon. From reaſon, therefore, we are very properly ſaid to derive all thoſe general maxims and ideas. It is by theſe, however, that we regulate the greater part of our moral judgments, which would be extremely uncertain and precarious if they depended altogether upon what is liable to ſo many variations as immediate ſentiment and feeling, which the different ſtates of health and humour are capable of altering ſo eſſentially. As our moſt ſolid judgments, therefore, with regard to right and wrong, are regulated by maxims and ideas derived from an induction of reaſon, virtue may very properly be ſaid

to conſiſt in a conformity to reaſon, and ſo far this faculty may be conſidered as the ſource and principle of approbation and diſapprobation.

But though reaſon is undoubtedly the ſource of the general rules of morality, and of all the moral judgments which we form by means of them; it is altogether abſurd and unintelligible to ſuppoſe that the firſt perceptions of right and wrong can be derived from reaſon, even in thoſe particular caſes upon the experience of which the general rules are formed. Theſe firſt perceptions, as well as all other experiments upon which any general rules are founded, cannot be the object of reaſon, but of immediate ſenſe and feeling. It is by finding in a vaſt variety of inſtances that one tenor of conduct conſtantly pleaſes in a certain manner, and that another as conſtantly diſpleaſes the mind, that we form the general rules of morality. But reaſon cannot render any particular object either agreeable or diſagreeable to the mind for its own ſake. Reaſon may ſhow that this object

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is the means of obtaining ſome other which is naturally either pleaſing or diſpleaſing, and in this manner may render it either agreeable or diſagreeable for the ſake of ſomething elſe. But nothing can be agreeable or diſagreeable for its own ſake, which is not rendered ſuch by immediate ſenſe and feeling. If virtue, therefore, in every particular inſtance, neceſſarily pleaſes for its own ſake, and if vice as certainly diſpleaſes the mind, it cannot be reaſon, but immediate ſenſe and feeling, which, in this manner, reconciles us to the one, and alienates us from the other.

Pleaſure and pain are the great objects of deſire and averſion: but theſe are diſtinguiſhed not by reaſon, but by immediate ſenſe and feeling. If virtue, therefore, be deſirable for its own ſake, and if vice be, in the ſame manner, the object of averſion, it cannot be reaſon which originally diſtinguiſhes thoſe different qualities, but immediate ſenſe and feeling.

As reaſon, however, in a certain ſenſe, may juſtly be conſidered as the principle of approbation and diſapprobation, theſe ſentiments were, through inattention, long regarded as originally flowing from the operations of this faculty. Dr. Hutcheſon had the merit of being the firſt who diſtinguiſhed with any degree of preciſion in what reſpect all moral diſtinctions may be ſaid to ariſe from reaſon, and in what reſpect they are founded upon immediate ſenſe and feeling. In his illuſtrations upon the moral ſenſe he has explained this ſo fully, and, in my opinion, ſo unanſwerably, that, if any controverſy is ſtill kept up about this ſubject, I can impute it to nothing, but either to inattention to what that gentleman has written, or to a ſuperſtitious attachment to certain forms of expreſſion, a weakneſs not very uncommon among the learned, eſpecially in ſubjects ſo deeply intereſting as the preſent, in which a man of virtue is often loath to abandon, even the propriety of a ſingle phraſe which he has been accuſtomed to.

CHAP. III.

Of thoſe Syſtems which make Sentiment the Principle of Approbation.

THOSE ſyſtems which make ſentiment the principle of approbation may be divided into two different claſſes.

I. According to ſome, the principle of approbation is founded upon a ſentiment of a peculiar nature, upon a particular power of perception exerted by the mind at the view of certain actions or affections; ſome of which affecting this faculty in an agreeable and others in a diſagreeable manner, the former are ſtamped with the characters of right, laudable, and virtuous; the latter with thoſe of wrong, blamable, and vicious. This ſentiment being of a peculiar nature diſtinct from every other, and the effect of a particular power of perception, they

give it a particular name, and call it a moral ſenſe.

II. According to others, in order to account for the principle of approbation, there is no occaſion for ſuppoſing any new power of perception which had never been heard of before: Nature, they imagine, acts here, as in all other caſes, with the ſtricteſt œconomy, and produces a multitude of effects from one and the ſame cauſe; and ſympathy, a power which has always been taken notice of, and with which the mind is manifeſtly endowed, is, they think, ſufficient to account for all the effects aſcribed to this peculiar faculty.

I. Dr. Hutcheſon* had been at great pains to prove that the principle of approbation was not founded on ſelf-love. He had demonſtrated too that it could not ariſe from any operation of reaſon. Nothing remained, he thought, but to ſuppoſe it a faculty of a peculiar kind, with which Na-

* Inquiry concerning Virtue.

ture had endowed the human mind, in order to produce this one particular and important effect. When ſelf-love and reaſon were both excluded, it did not occur to him that there was any other known faculty of the mind which could in any reſpect anſwer this purpoſe.

This new power of perception he called a moral ſenſe, and ſuppoſed it to be ſomewhat analogous to the external ſenſes. As the bodies around us, by affecting theſe in a certain manner, appear to poſſeſs the different qualities of ſound, taſte, odour, colour; ſo the various affections of the human mind, by touching this particular faculty in a certain manner, appear to poſſeſs the different qualities of amiable and odious, of virtuous and vicious, of right and wrong.

The various ſenſes or powers of perception*, from which the human mind derives all its ſimple ideas, were, according to this

* Treatiſe of the Paſſions.

ſyſtem, of two different kinds, of which the one were called the direct or antecedent, the other, the reflex or conſequent ſenſes. The direct ſenſes were thoſe faculties from which the mind derived the perception of ſuch ſpecies of things as did not preſuppoſe the antecedent perception of any other. Thus ſounds and colours were objects of the direct ſenſes. To hear a ſound or to ſee a colour does not preſuppoſe the antecedent perception of any other quality or object. The reflex or conſequent ſenſes, on the other hand, were thoſe faculties from which the mind derived the perception of ſuch ſpecies of things as preſuppoſed the antecedent perception of ſome other. Thus harmony and beauty were objects of the reflex ſenſes. In order to perceive the harmony of a ſound, or the beauty of a colour, we muſt firſt perceive the ſound or the colour. The moral ſenſe was conſidered as a faculty of this kind. That faculty, which Mr. Locke calls reflection, and from which he derived the ſimple ideas of the different paſſions and emotions of the human mind, was, according to Dr. Hutcheſon,

ſon, a direct internal ſenſe. That faculty again by which we perceived the beauty or deformity, the virtue or vice of thoſe different paſſions and emotions, was a reflex, internal ſenſe.

Dr. Hutcheſon endeavoured ſtill further to ſupport this doctrine, by ſhewing that it was agreeable to the analogy of nature, and that the mind was endowed with a variety of other reflex ſenſes exactly ſimilar to the moral ſenſe; ſuch as a ſenſe of beauty and deformity in external objects; a public ſenſe, by which we ſympathize with the happineſs or miſery of our fellow-creatures; a ſenſe of ſhame and honour, and a ſenſe of ridicule.

But notwithſtanding all the pains which this ingenious philoſopher has taken to prove that the principle of approbation is founded in a peculiar power of perception, ſomewhat analogous to the external ſenſes, there are ſome conſequences which he acknowledges to follow from this doctrine, that will, perhaps, be regarded by many as a ſuf-

a ſufficient confutation of it. The qualities, he allows*, which belong to the objects of any ſenſe, cannot, without the greateſt abſurdity, be aſcribed to the ſenſe itſelf. Who ever thought of calling the ſenſe of ſeeing black or white, the ſenſe of hearing loud or low, or the ſenſe of taſting ſweet or bitter? And, according to him, it is equally abſurd to call our moral faculties virtuous or vicious, morally good or evil. Theſe qualities belong to the objects of thoſe faculties, not to the faculties themſelves. If any man, therefore, was ſo abſurdly conſtituted as to approve of cruelty and injuſtice as the higheſt virtues, and to diſapprove of equity and humanity as the moſt pitiful vices, ſuch a conſtitution of mind might indeed be regarded as inconvenient both to the individual and to the ſociety, and likewiſe as ſtrange, ſurpriſing, and unnatural in itſelf; but it could not, without the greateſt abſurdity, be denominated vicious or morally evil.

* Illuſtrations upon the Moral Senſe, ſect. 1. p. 237, et ſeq.; third edition.

Yet

Yet ſurely if we ſaw any man ſhouting with admiration and applauſe at a barbarous and unmerited execution, which ſome inſolent tyrant had ordered, we ſhould not think we were guilty of any great abſurdity in denominating this behaviour vicious and morally evil in the higheſt degree, though it expreſſed nothing but depraved moral faculties, or an abſurd approbation of this horrid action, as of what was noble, magnanimous, and great. Our heart, I imagine, at the ſight of ſuch a ſpectator, would forget for a while its ſympathy with the ſufferer, and feel nothing but horror and deteſtation, at the thought of ſo execrable a wretch. We ſhould abominate him even more than the tyrant who might be goaded on by the ſtrong paſſions of jealouſy, fear, and reſentment, and upon that account be more excuſable. But the ſentiments of the ſpectator would appear altogether without cauſe or motive, and therefore moſt perfectly and completely deteſtable. There is no perverſion of ſentiment or affection which our heart would be more averſe to enter into, or which it would reject with greater

greater hatred and indignation than one of this kind; and ſo far from regarding ſuch a conſtitution of mind as being merely ſomething ſtrange or inconvenient, and not in any reſpect vicious or morally evil, we ſhould rather conſider it as the very laſt and moſt dreadful ſtage of moral depravity.

Correct moral ſentiments, on the contrary, naturally appear in ſome degree laudable and morally good. The man, whoſe cenſure and applauſe are upon all occaſions ſuited with the greateſt accuracy to the value or unworthineſs of the object, ſeems to deſerve a degree even of moral approbation. We admire the delicate preciſion of his moral ſentiments: they lead our own judgments, and, upon account of their uncommon and ſurpriſing juſtneſs, they even excite our wonder and applauſe. We cannot indeed be always ſure that the conduct of ſuch a perſon would be in any reſpect correſpondent to the preciſion and accuracy of his judgments concerning the conduct of others. Virtue requires habit and reſolution of mind, as well as delicacy of ſentiment; and

and unfortunately the former qualities are ſometimes wanting, where the latter is in the greateſt perfection. This diſpoſition of mind, however, though it may ſometimes be attended with imperfections, is incompatible with any thing that is groſsly criminal, and is the happieſt foundation upon which the ſuperſtructure of perfect virtue can be built. There are many men who mean very well, and ſeriouſly purpoſe to do what they think their duty, who notwithſtanding are diſagreeable on account of the coarſeneſs of their moral ſentiments.

It may be ſaid, perhaps, that though the principle of approbation is not founded upon any power of perception that is in any reſpect analogous to the external ſenſes, it may ſtill be founded upon a peculiar ſentiment which anſwers this one particular purpoſe and no other. Approbation and diſapprobation, it may be pretended, are certain feelings or emotions which ariſe in the mind upon the view of different characters and actions; and as reſentment might be called a ſenſe of injuries, or gratitude a

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ſenſe of benefits, ſo theſe may very properly receive the name of a ſenſe of right and wrong, or of a moral ſenſe.

But this account of things, though it may not be liable to the ſame objections with the foregoing, is expoſed to others which are equally unanſwerable.

Firſt of all, whatever variations any particular emotion may undergo, it ſtill preſerves the general features which diſtinguiſh it to be an emotion of ſuch a kind, and theſe general features are always more ſtriking and remarkable than any variation which it may undergo in particular caſes. Thus anger is an emotion of a particular kind: and accordingly its general features are always more diſtinguiſhable than all the variations it undergoes in particular caſes. Anger againſt a man is, no doubt, ſomewhat different from anger againſt a woman, and that again from anger againſt a child. In each of thoſe three caſes, the general paſſion of anger receives a different modification from the particular character of its object,

object, as may eaſily be obſerved by the attentive. But ſtill the general features of the paſſion predominate in all theſe caſes. To diſtinguiſh theſe, requires no nice obſervation: a very delicate attention, on the contrary, is neceſſary to diſcover their variations: every body takes notice of the former; ſcarce any body obſerves the latter. If approbation and diſapprobation, therefore, were, like gratitude and reſentment, emotions of a particular kind, diſtinct from every other, we ſhould expect that in all the variations which either of them might undergo, it would ſtill retain the general features which mark it to be an emotion of ſuch a particular kind, clear, plain, and eaſily diſtinguiſhable. But in fact it happens quite otherwiſe. If we attend to what we really feel when upon different occaſions we either approve or diſapprove, we ſhall find that our emotion in one caſe is often totally different from that in another, and that no common features can poſſibly be diſcovered between them. Thus the approbation with which we view a tender, delicate, and humane ſentiment, is

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quite different from that with which we are ſtruck by one that appears great, daring, and magnanimous. Our approbation of both may, upon different occaſions, be perfect and entire; but we are ſoftened by the one, and we are elevated by the other, and there is no ſort of reſemblance between the emotions which they excite in us. But, according to that ſyſtem which I have been endeavouring to eſtabliſh, this muſt neceſſarily be the caſe. As the emotions of the perſon whom we approve of, are, in thoſe two caſes, quite oppoſite to one another, and as our approbation ariſes from ſympathy with thoſe oppoſite emotions, what we feel upon the one occaſion, can have no ſort of reſemblance to what we feel upon the other. But this could not happen if approbation conſiſted in a peculiar emotion which had nothing in common with the ſentiments we approved of, but which aroſe at the view of thoſe ſentiments, like any other paſſion at the view of its proper object. The ſame thing holds true with regard to diſapprobation. Our horror for cruelty has no ſort of reſemblance to our contempt for mean-

mean-ſpiritedneſs. It is quite a different ſpecies of diſcord which we feel at the view of thoſe two different vices, between our own minds and thoſe of the perſon whoſe ſentiments and behaviour we conſider.

Secondly, I have already obſerved, that not only the different paſſions or affections of the human mind which are approved or diſapproved of, appear morally good or evil, but that proper and improper approbation appear to our natural ſentiments, to be ſtamped with the ſame characters. I would aſk, therefore, how it is, that, according to this ſyſtem, we approve or diſapprove of proper or improper approbation? To this queſtion there is, I imagine, but one reaſonable anſwer, which can poſſibly be given. It muſt be ſaid, that when the approbation with which our neighbour regards the conduct of a third perſon coincides with our own, we approve of his approbation, and conſider it as, in ſome meaſure, morally good; and that, on the contrary, when it does not coincide with our own ſenti-

ments, we diſapprove of it, and conſider it as, in ſome meaſure, morally evil. It muſt be allowed, therefore, that, at leaſt in this one caſe, the coincidence or oppoſition of ſentiments, between the obſerver and the perſon obſerved, conſtitutes moral approbation or diſapprobation. And if it does ſo in this one caſe, I would aſk, why not in every other? to what purpoſe imagine a new power of perception in order to account for thoſe ſentiments?

Againſt every account of the principle of approbation, which makes it depend upon a peculiar ſentiment, diſtinct from every other, I would object; that it is ſtrange that this ſentiment, which Providence undoubtedly intended to be the governing principle of human nature, ſhould hitherto have been ſo little taken notice of, as not to have got a name in any language. The word moral ſenſe is of very late formation, and cannot yet be conſidered as making part of the Engliſh tongue. The word approbation has but within theſe few years been appropriated

priated to denote peculiarly any thing of this kind. In propriety of language we approve of whatever is entirely to our ſatisfaction, of the form of a building, of the contrivance of a machine, of the flavour of a diſh of meat. The word conſcience does not immediately denote any moral faculty by which we approve or diſapprove. Conſcience ſuppoſes, indeed, the exiſtence of ſome ſuch faculty, and properly ſignifies our conſciouſneſs of having acted agreeably or contrary to its directions. When love, hatred, joy, ſorrow, gratitude, reſentment, with ſo many other paſſions which are all ſuppoſed to be the ſubjects of this principle, have made themſelves conſiderable enough to get titles to know them by, is it not ſurpriſing that the ſovereign of them all ſhould hitherto have been ſo little heeded, that, a few philoſophers excepted, nobody has yet thought it worth while to beſtow a name upon it?

When we approve of any character or action, the ſentiments which we feel, are, according to the foregoing ſyſtem, derived

from four ſources, which are in ſome reſpects different from one another. Firſt, we ſympathize with the motives of the agent; ſecondly, we enter into the gratitude of thoſe who receive the benefit of his actions; thirdly, we obſerve that his conduct has been agreeable to the general rules by which thoſe two ſympathies generally act; and, laſt of all, when we conſider ſuch actions as making a part of a ſyſtem of behaviour which tends to promote the happineſs either of the individual or of the ſociety, they appear to derive a beauty from this utility, not unlike that which we aſcribe to any well-contrived machine. After deducting, in any one particular caſe, all that muſt be acknowledged to proceed from ſome one or other of theſe four principles, I ſhould be glad to know what remains, and I ſhall freely allow this overplus to be aſcribed to a moral ſenſe, or to any other peculiar faculty, provided any body will aſcertain preciſely what this overplus is. It might be expected, perhaps, that if there was any ſuch peculiar principle, ſuch as this moral ſenſe is ſuppoſed to be, we

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ſhould feel it, in ſome particular caſes, ſeparated and detached from every other, as we often feel joy, ſorrow, hope, and fear, pure and unmixed with any other emotion. This however, I imagine, cannot even be pretended. I have never heard any inſtance alleged in which this principle could be ſaid to exert itſelf alone and unmixed with ſympathy or antipathy, with gratitude or reſentment, with the perception of the agreement or diſagreement of any action to an eſtabliſhed rule, or laſt of all with that general taſte for beauty and order which is excited by inanimated as well as by animated objects.

II. There is another ſyſtem which attempts to account for the origin of our moral ſentiments from ſympathy, diſtinct from that which I have been endeavouring to eſtabliſh. It is that which places virtue in utility, and accounts for the pleaſure with which the ſpectator ſurveys the utility of any quality from ſympathy with the happineſs of thoſe who are affected by it.

This ſympathy is different both from that by which we enter into the motives of the agent, and from that by which we go along with the gratitude of the perſons who are benefited by his actions. It is the ſame principle with that by which we approve of a well-contrived machine. But no machine can be the object of either of thoſe two laſt mentioned ſympathies. I have already, in the fourth part of this diſcourſe, given ſome account of this ſyſtem.

SECTION IV.

Of the Manner in which different Authors have treated of the practical Rules of Morality.

It was obſerved in the third part of this diſcourſe, that the rules of juſtice are the only rules of morality which are preciſe and accurate; that thoſe of all the other virtues are looſe, vague, and indeterminate; that the firſt may be compared to the rules of grammar; the others to thoſe which critics lay down for the attainment of what is ſublime and elegant in compoſition, and which preſent us rather with a general idea of the perfection we ought to aim at, than afford us any certain and infallible directions for acquiring it.

As the different rules of morality admit ſuch different degrees of accuracy, thoſe authors who have endeavoured to collect

and digeſt them into ſyſtems have done it in two different manners; and one ſet has followed through the whole that looſe method to which they were naturally directed by the conſideration of one ſpecies of virtues; while another has as univerſally endeavoured to introduce into their precepts that ſort of accuracy of which only ſome of them are ſuſceptible. The firſt have wrote like critics, the ſecond like grammarians.

I. The firſt, among whom we may count all the ancient moraliſts, have contented themſelves with deſcribing in a general manner the different vices and virtues, and with pointing out the deformity and miſery of the one diſpoſition as well as the propriety and happineſs of the other, but have not affected to lay down many preciſe rules that are to hold good unexceptionably in all particular caſes. They have only endeavoured to aſcertain, as far as language is capable of aſcertaining, firſt, wherein conſiſts the ſentiment of the heart, upon which each particular virtue is found-

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ed, what ſort of internal feeling or emotion it is which conſtitutes the eſſence of friendſhip, of humanity, of generoſity, of juſtice, of magnanimity, and of all the other virtues, as well as of the vices which are oppoſed to them: and, ſecondly, what is the general way of acting, the ordinary tone and tenor of conduct to which each of thoſe ſentiments would direct us, or how it is that a friendly, a generous, a brave, a juſt, and a humane man, would, upon ordinary occaſions, chuſe to act.

To characterize the ſentiment of the heart, upon which each particular virtue is founded, though it requires both a delicate and an accurate pencil, is a taſk, however, which may be executed with ſome degree of exactneſs. It is impoſſible, indeed, to expreſs all the variations which each ſentiment either does or ought to undergo, according to every poſſible variation of circumſtances. They are endleſs, and language wants names to mark them by. The ſentiment of friendſhip, for example, which we feel for an old man is different from that which we feel for a young:

[illegible]

To describe, in a general manner, what is the ordinary way of acting to which each

each virtue would prompt us, is ſtill more eaſy. It is, indeed, ſcarce poſſible to deſcribe the internal ſentiment or emotion upon which it is founded, without doing ſomething of this kind. It is impoſſible by language to expreſs, if I may ſay ſo, the inviſible features of all the different modifications of paſſion as they ſhow themſelves within. There is no other way of marking and diſtinguiſhing them from one another, but by deſcribing the effects which they produce without, the alterations which they occaſion in the countenance, in the air and external behaviour, the reſolutions they ſuggeſt, the actions they prompt to. It is thus that Cicero, in the firſt book of his Offices, endeavours to direct us to the practice of the four cardinal virtues, and that Ariſtotle in the practical parts of his Ethics, points out to us the different habits by which he would have us regulate our behaviour, ſuch as liberality, magnificence, magnanimity, and even jocularity and good-humour, qualities which that indulgent philoſopher has thought worthy of a place in the catalogue of the virtues, though the

ſtrictneſs of that approbation which we naturally beſtow upon them, ſhould not ſeem to entitle them to ſo venerable a name.

Such works preſent us with agreeable and lively pictures of manners. By the vivacity of their deſcriptions they inflame our natural love of virtue, and increaſe our abhorrence of vice: by the juſtneſs as well as delicacy of their obſervations they may often help both to correct and to aſcertain our natural ſentiments with regard to the propriety of conduct, and ſuggeſting many nice and delicate attentions, form us to a more exact juſtneſs of behaviour, than what, without ſuch inſtruction, we ſhould have been apt to think of. In treating of the rules of morality, in this manner, conſiſts the ſcience which is properly called Ethics, a ſcience which, though like criticiſm it does not admit of the moſt accurate preciſion, is, however, both highly uſeful and agreeable. It is of all others the moſt ſuſceptible of the embelliſhments of eloquence, and by means of them of beſtowing, if that be poſſible, a new importance upon

upon the ſmalleſt rules of duty. Its precepts, when thus dreſſed and adorned, are capable of producing upon the flexibility of youth, the nobleſt and moſt laſting impreſſions, and as they fall in with the natural magnanimity of that generous age, they are able to inſpire, for a time at leaſt, the moſt heroic reſolutions, and thus tend both to eſtabliſh and confirm the beſt and moſt uſeful habits of which the mind of man is ſuſceptible. Whatever precept and exhortation can do to animate us to the practice of virtue, is done by this ſcience delivered in this manner.

II. The ſecond ſet of moraliſts, among whom we may count all the caſuiſts of the middle and latter ages of the chriſtian church, as well as all thoſe who in this and in the preceding century have treated of what is called natural juriſprudence, do not content themſelves with characterizing in this general manner that tenor of conduct which they would recommend to us, but endeavour to lay down exact and preciſe rules for the direction of every circumſtance of our

our behaviour. As juſtice is the only virtue with regard to which ſuch exact rules can properly be given; it is this virtue that has chiefly fallen under the conſideration of thoſe two different ſets of writers. They treat of it, however, in a very different manner.

Thoſe who write upon the principles of juriſprudence, conſider only what the perſon to whom the obligation is due, ought to think himſelf entitled to exact by force; what every impartial ſpectator would approve of him for exacting; or what a judge or arbiter, to whom he had ſubmitted his caſe, and who had undertaken to do him juſtice, ought to oblige the other perſon to ſuffer or to perform. The caſuiſts, on the other hand, do not ſo much examine what it is, that might properly be exacted by force, as what it is, that the perſon who owes the obligation ought to think himſelf bound to perform from the moſt ſacred and ſcrupulous regard to the general rules of juſtice, and from the moſt conſcientious dread, either of wronging his neighbour,

or

or of violating the integrity of his own character. It is the end of juriſprudence to preſcribe rules for the deciſions of judges and arbiters. It is the end of caſuiſtry to preſcribe rules for the conduct of a good man. By obſerving all the rules of juriſprudence, ſuppoſing them ever ſo perfect, we ſhould deſerve nothing but to be free from external puniſhment. By obſerving thoſe of caſuiſtry, ſuppoſing them ſuch as they ought to be, we ſhould be entitled to conſiderable praiſe by the exact and ſcrupulous delicacy of our behaviour.

It may frequently happen that a good man ought to think himſelf bound, from a ſacred and conſcientious regard to the general rules of juſtice, to perform many things which it would be the higheſt injuſtice to extort from him, or for any judge or arbiter to impoſe upon him by force. To give a trite example; a highwayman, by the fear of death, obliges a traveller to promiſe him a certain ſum of money. Whether ſuch a promiſe, extorted in this manner by unjuſt force, ought to be regarded as obligatory,

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is a queſtion that has been very much debated.

If we conſider it merely as a queſtion of juriſprudence, the deciſion can admit of no doubt. It would be abſurd to ſuppoſe that the highwayman can be entitled to uſe force to conſtrain the other to perform. To extort the promiſe was a crime which deſerved the higheſt puniſhment, and to extort the performance would only be adding a new crime to the former. He can complain of no injury who has been only deceived by the perſon by whom he might juſtly have been killed. To ſuppoſe that a judge ought to enforce the obligation of ſuch promiſes, or that the magiſtrate ought to allow them to ſuſtain action at law, would be the moſt ridiculous of all abſurdities. If we conſider this queſtion, therefore, as a queſtion of juriſprudence, we can be at no loſs about the deciſion.

But if we conſider it as a queſtion of caſuiſtry, it will not be ſo eaſily determined. Whether a good man, from a conſcientious regard

regard to that moſt ſacred rule of juſtice, which commands the obſervance of all ſerious promiſes, would not think himſelf bound to perform, is at leaſt much more doubtful. That no regard is due to the diſappointment of the wretch who brings him into this ſituation, that no injury is done to the robber, and conſequently that nothing can be extorted by force, will admit of no ſort of diſpute. But whether ſome regard is not, in this caſe, due to his own dignity and honour, to the inviolable ſacredneſs of that part of his character which makes him reverence the law of truth and abhor every thing that approaches to treachery and falſehood, may, perhaps, more reaſonably be made a queſtion. The caſuiſts accordingly are greatly divided about it. One party, with whom we may count Cicero among the ancients, among the moderns, Puffendorf, Barbeyrac his commentator, and above all the late Dr. Hutcheſon, one who in moſt caſes was by no means a looſe caſuiſt, determine, without any heſitation, that no ſort of regard is due to any ſuch promiſe, and that to think otherwiſe is mere weak-

neſs and ſuperſtition. Another party, among whom we may reckon * ſome of the ancient fathers of the church, as well as ſome very eminent modern caſuiſts, have been of another opinion, and have judged all ſuch promiſes obligatory.

If we conſider the matter according to the common ſentiments of mankind, we ſhall find that ſome regard would be thought due even to a promiſe of this kind; but that it is impoſſible to determine how much, by any general rule, that will apply to all caſes without exception. The man who was quite frank and eaſy in making promiſes of this kind, and who violated them with as little ceremony, we ſhould not chuſe for our friend and companion. A gentleman who ſhould promiſe a highwayman five pounds and not perform, would incur ſome blame. If the ſum promiſed, however, was very great, it might be more doubtful, what was proper to be done. If it was ſuch, for example, that the payment of it would entirely ruin the family of the promiſer, if it was ſo great as

* St. Auguſtine, La Placette.

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to be ſufficient for promoting the moſt uſeful purpoſes, it would appear in ſome meaſure criminal, at leaſt extremely improper, to throw it, for the ſake of a punctilio, into ſuch worthleſs hands. The man who ſhould beggar himſelf, or who ſhould throw away an hundred thouſand pounds, though he could afford that vaſt ſum, for the ſake of obſerving ſuch a parole with a thief, would appear to the common ſenſe of mankind, abſurd and extravagant in the higheſt degree. Such profuſion would ſeem inconſiſtent with his duty, with what he owed both to himſelf and others, and what, therefore, regard to a promiſe extorted in this manner, could by no means authoriſe. To fix, however, by any preciſe rule, what degree of regard ought to be paid to it, or what might be the greateſt ſum which could be due from it, is evidently impoſſible. This would vary according to the characters of the perſons, according to their circumſtances, according to the ſolemnity of the promiſe, and even according to the incidents of the rencounter: and if the promiſer had been treated with a great deal of that ſort

of gallantry, which is ſometimes to be met with in perſons of the moſt abandoned characters, more would ſeem due than upon other occaſions. It may be ſaid in general, that exact propriety requires the obſervance of all ſuch promiſes, wherever it is not inconſiſtent with ſome other duties that are more ſacred; ſuch as regard to the public intereſt, to thoſe whom gratitude, whom natural affection, or whom the laws of proper beneficence ſhould prompt us to provide for. But, as was formerly taken notice of, we have no preciſe rules to determine what external actions are due from a regard to ſuch motives, nor, conſequently, when it is that thoſe virtues are inconſiſtent with the obſervance of ſuch promiſes.

It is to be obſerved, however, that whenever ſuch promiſes are violated, though for the moſt neceſſary reaſons, it is always with ſome degree of diſhonour to the perſon who made them. After they are made, we may be convinced of the impropriety of obſerving them. But ſtill there is ſome fault in having made them. It is at leaſt a departure

departure from the higheſt and nobleſt maxims of magnanimity and honour. A brave man ought to die, rather than make a promiſe which he can neither keep without folly, nor violate without ignominy. For ſome degree of ignominy always attends a ſituation of this kind. Treachery and falſehood are vices ſo dangerous, ſo dreadful, and, at the ſame time, ſuch as may ſo eaſily, and, upon many occaſions, ſo ſafely be indulged, that we are more jealous of them than of almoſt any other. Our imagination therefore attaches the idea of ſhame to all violations of faith, in every circumſtance and in every ſituation. They reſemble, in this reſpect, the violations of chaſtity in the fair ſex, a virtue of which, for the like reaſons, we are exceſſively jealous; and our ſentiments are not more delicate with regard to the one, than with regard to the other. Breach of chaſtity diſhonours irretrievably. No circumſtances, no ſolicitation can excuſe it; no ſorrow, no repentance atone for it. We are ſo nice in this reſpect that even a rape diſhonours, and the inno-

cence of the mind cannot, in our imagination, waſh out the pollution of the body. It is the ſame caſe with the violation of faith, when it has been ſolemnly pledged, even to the moſt worthleſs of mankind. Fidelity is ſo neceſſary a virtue, that we apprehend it in general to be due even to thoſe to whom nothing elſe is due, and whom we think it lawful to kill and deſtroy. It is to no purpoſe that the perſon who has been guilty of the breach of it, urges that he promiſed in order to ſave his life, and that he broke his promiſe becauſe it was inconſiſtent with ſome other reſpectable duty to keep it. Theſe circumſtances may alleviate, but cannot entirely wipe out his diſhonour. He appears to have been guilty of an action with which, in the imaginations of men, ſome degree of ſhame is inſeparably connected. He has broke a promiſe which he had ſolemnly averred he would maintain; and his character, if not irretrievably ſtained and polluted, has at leaſt a ridicule affixed to it, which it will be very difficult entirely to efface; and no man,

man, I imagine, who had gone through an adventure of this kind would be fond of telling the ſtory.

This inſtance may ſerve to ſhow wherein conſiſts the difference between caſuiſtry and juriſprudence, even when both of them conſider the obligations of the general rules of juſtice.

But though this difference be real and eſſential, though thoſe two ſciences propoſe quite different ends, the ſameneſs of the ſubject has made ſuch a ſimilarity between them, that the greater part of authors whoſe profeſſed deſign was to treat of juriſprudence, have determined the different queſtions they examine, ſometimes according to the principles of that ſcience, and ſometimes according to thoſe of caſuiſtry, without diſtinguiſhing, and, perhaps, without being themſelves aware when they did the one, and when the other.

The doctrine of the caſuiſts, however, is by no means confined to the conſideration

of what a conſcientious regard to the gene-ral rules of juſtice would demand of us. It embraces many other parts of Chriſtian and moral duty. What ſeems principally to have given occaſion to the cultivation of this ſpecies of ſcience was the cuſtom of auricular confeſſion, introduced by the Roman Catholic ſuperſtition, in times of barbariſm and ignorance. By that inſtitu-tion, the moſt ſecret actions, and even the thoughts of every perſon, which could be ſuſpected of receding in the ſmalleſt degree from the rules of Chriſtian purity, were to be revealed to the confeſſor. The confeſſor informed his penitents whether, and in what reſpect they had violated their duty, and what penance it behoved them to un-dergo, before he could abſolve them in the name of the offended Deity.

The conſciouſneſs, or even the ſuſpicion of having done wrong, is a load upon every mind, and is accompanied with anxiety and terror in all thoſe who are not hardened by long habits of iniquity. Men, in this, as in all other diſtreſſes, are naturally eager to diſbur-

diſburthen themſelves of the oppreſſion which they feel upon their thoughts, by unboſoming the agony of their mind to ſome perſon whoſe ſecrecy and diſcretion they can confide in. The ſhame, which they ſuffer from this acknowledgment, is fully compenſated by that alleviation of their uneaſineſs which the ſympathy of their confident ſeldom fails to occaſion. It relieves them to find that they are not altogether unworthy of regard, and that however their paſt conduct may be cenſured, their preſent diſpoſition is at leaſt approved of, and is perhaps ſufficient to compenſate the other, at leaſt to maintain them in ſome degree of eſteem with their friend. A numerous and artful clergy had, in thoſe times of ſuperſtition, inſinuated themſelves into the confidence of almoſt every private family. They poſſeſſed all the little learning which the times could afford, and their manners, though in many reſpects rude and diſorderly, were poliſhed and regular compared with thoſe of the age they lived in. They were regarded, therefore, not only as the great directors of all religious,

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but of all moral duties. Their familiarity gave reputation to whoever was ſo happy as to poſſeſs it, and every mark of their diſapprobation ſtamped the deepeſt ignominy upon all who had the misfortune to fall under it. Being conſidered as the great judges of right and wrong, they were naturally conſulted about all ſcruples that occurred, and it was reputable for any perſon to have it known that he made thoſe holy men the confidents of all ſuch ſecrets, and took no important or delicate ſtep in his conduct without their advice and approbation. It was not difficult for the clergy, therefore, to get it eſtabliſhed as a general rule, that they ſhould be entruſted with what it had already become faſhionable to entruſt them, and with what they generally would have been entruſted, though no ſuch rule had been eſtabliſhed. To qualify themſelves for confeſſors became thus a neceſſary part of the ſtudy of churchmen and divines, and they were thence led to collect what are called caſes of conſcience, nice and delicate ſituations in which it is hard to determine whereabouts the propriety

priety of conduct may lie. Such works, they imagined, might be of uſe both to the directors of conſciences and to thoſe who were to be directed; and hence the origin of books of caſuiſtry.

The moral duties which fell under the conſideration of the caſuiſts were chiefly thoſe which can, in ſome meaſure at leaſt, be circumſcribed within general rules, and of which the violation is naturally attended with ſome degree of remorſe and ſome dread of ſuffering puniſhment. The deſign of that inſtitution which gave occaſion to their works, was to appeaſe thoſe terrors of conſcience which attend upon the infringement of ſuch duties. But it is not every virtue of which the defect is accompanied with any very ſevere compunctions of this kind, and no man applies to his confeſſor for abſolution, becauſe he did not perform the moſt generous, the moſt friendly, or the moſt magnanimous action which, in his circumſtances, it was poſſible to perform. In failures of this kind, the rule that is violated is commonly not very determinate, and is generally of ſuch

ſuch a nature too, that though the obſervance of it might entitle to honour and reward, the violation ſeems to expoſe to no poſitive blame, cenſure, or puniſhment. The exerciſe of ſuch virtues the caſuiſts ſeem to have regarded as a ſort of works of ſupererogation, which could not be very ſtrictly exacted, and which it was therefore unneceſſary for them to treat of.

The breaches of moral duty, therefore, which came before the tribunal of the confeſſor, and upon that account fell under the cognizance of the caſuiſts, were chiefly of three different kinds.

Firſt and principally, breaches of the rules of juſtice. The rules here are all expreſs and poſitive, and the violation of them is naturally attended with the conſciouſneſs of deſerving, and the dread of ſuffering puniſhment both from God and man.

Secondly, breaches of the rules of chaſtity. Theſe in all groſſer inſtances are real breaches of the rules of juſtice, and no perſon

ſon can be guilty of them without doing the moſt unpardonable injury to ſome other. In ſmaller inſtances, when they amount only to a violation of thoſe exact decorums which ought to be obſerved in the converſation of the two ſexes, they cannot indeed juſtly be conſidered as violations of the rules of juſtice. They are generally, however, violations of a pretty plain rule, and, at leaſt in one of the ſexes, tend to bring ignominy upon the perſon who has been guilty of them, and conſequently to be attended in the ſcrupulous with ſome degree of ſhame and contrition of mind.

Thirdly, breaches of the rules of veracity. The violation of truth, it is to be obſerved, is not always a breach of juſtice, though it is ſo upon many occaſions, and conſequently cannot always expoſe to any external puniſhment. The vice of common lying, though a moſt miſerable meanneſs, may frequently do hurt to nobody, and in this caſe no claim of vengeance or ſatisfaction can be due either to the perſons impoſed upon, or to others. But though the violation of truth

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is not always a breach of juſtice, it is always a breach of a very plain rule, and, what naturally tends to cover with ſhame the perſon who has been guilty of it.

There ſeems to be in young children an inſtinctive diſpoſition to believe whatever they are told. Nature ſeems to have judged it neceſſary for their preſervation that they ſhould, for ſome time at leaſt, put implicit confidence in thoſe to whom the care of their childhood, and of the earlieſt and moſt neceſſary parts of their education, is intruſted. Their credulity, accordingly, is exceſſive, and it requires long and much experience of the falſehood of mankind to reduce them to a reaſonable degree of diffidence and diſtruſt. In grown-up people the degrees of credulity are, no doubt, very different. The wiſeſt and moſt experienced are generally the leaſt credulous. But the man ſcarce lives who is not more credulous than he ought to be, and who does not, upon many occaſions, give credit to tales, which not only turn out to be perfectly falſe, but which a very moderate degree of reflection

flection and attention might have taught him could not well be true. The natural diſpoſition is always to believe. It is acquired wiſdom and experience only that teach incredulity, and they very ſeldom teach it enough. The wiſeſt and moſt cautious of us all frequently gives credit to ſtories which he himſelf is afterwards both aſhamed and aſtoniſhed that he could poſſibly think of believing.

The man whom we believe is neceſſarily, in the things concerning which we believe him, our leader and director, and we look up to him with a certain degree of eſteem and reſpect. But as from admiring other people we come to wiſh to be admired ourſelves; ſo from being led and directed by other people we learn to wiſh to become ourſelves leaders and directors. And as we cannot always be ſatisfied merely with being admired, unleſs we can at the ſame time perſuade ourſelves that we are in ſome degree really worthy of admiration; ſo we cannot always be ſatisfied merely with being believed, unleſs we are at the ſame

time conſcious that we are really worthy of belief. As the deſire of praiſe and that of praiſe-worthineſs, though very much a-kin, are yet diſtinct and ſeparate deſires; ſo the deſire of being believed and that of being worthy of belief, though very much a-kin too, are equally diſtinct and ſeparate deſires.

The deſire of being believed, the deſire of perſuading, of leading and directing other people, ſeems to be one of the ſtrongeſt of all our natural deſires. It is, perhaps, the inſtinct upon which is founded the faculty of ſpeech, the characteriſtical faculty of human nature. No other animal poſſeſſes this faculty, and we cannot diſcover in any other animal any deſire to lead and direct the judgment and conduct of its fellows. Great ambition, the deſire of real ſuperiority, of leading and directing, ſeems to be altogether peculiar to man, and ſpeech is the great inſtrument of ambition, of real ſuperiority, of leading and directing the judgments and conduct of other people.

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It is always mortifying not to be believed, and it is doubly ſo when we ſuſpect that it is becauſe we are ſuppoſed to be unworthy of belief and capable of ſeriouſly and wilfully deceiving. To tell a man that he lies, is of all affronts the moſt mortal. But whoever ſeriouſly and wilfully deceives is neceſſarily conſcious to himſelf that he merits this affront, that he does not deſerve to be believed, and that he forfeits all title to that ſort of credit from which alone he can derive any ſort of eaſe, comfort, or ſatisfaction in the ſociety of his equals. The man who had the misfortune to imagine that nobody believed a ſingle word he ſaid, would feel himſelf the outcaſt of human ſociety, would dread the very thought of going into it, or of preſenting himſelf before it, and could ſcarce fail, I think, to die of deſpair. It is probable, however, that no man ever had juſt reaſon to entertain this humiliating opinion of himſelf. The moſt notorious liar, I am diſpoſed to believe, tells the fair truth at leaſt twenty times for once that he ſeriouſly and deliberately lies; and, as in the moſt cautious the diſpoſition to believe

is apt to prevail over that to doubt and diſtruſt; ſo in thoſe who are the moſt regardleſs of truth, the natural diſpoſition to tell it prevails upon moſt occaſions over that to deceive, or in any reſpect to alter or diſguiſe it.

We are mortified when we happen to deceive other people, though unintentionally, and from having been ourſeves deceived. Though this involuntary falſehood may frequently be no mark of any want of veracity, of any want of the moſt perfect love of truth, it is always in ſome degree a mark of want of judgment, of want of memory, of improper credulity, of ſome degree of precipitancy and raſhneſs. It always diminiſhes our authority to perſuade, and always brings ſome degree of ſuſpicion upon our fitneſs to lead and direct. The man who ſometimes miſleads from miſtake, however, is widely different from him who is capable of wilfully deceiving. The former may ſafely be truſted upon many occaſions; the latter very ſeldom upon any.

Frankneſs and openneſs conciliate confidence. We truſt the man who ſeems willing to truſt us. We ſee clearly, we think, the road by which he means to conduct us, and we abandon ourſelves with pleaſure to his guidance and direction. Reſerve and concealment, on the contrary, call forth diffidence. We are afraid to follow the man who is going we do not know where. The great pleaſure of converſation and ſociety, beſides, ariſes from a certain correſpondence of ſentiments and opinions, from a certain harmony of minds, which like ſo many muſical inſtruments coincide and keep time with one another. But this moſt delightful harmony cannot be obtained unleſs there is a free communication of ſentiments and opinions. We all deſire, upon this account, to feel how each other is affected, to penetrate into each other's boſoms, and to obſerve the ſentiments and affections which really ſubſiſt there. The man who indulges us in this natural paſſion, who invites us into his heart, who, as it were, ſets open the gates of his breaſt to us, ſeems to exerciſe a ſpecies of hoſpitality more de-

lightful than any other. No man, who is in ordinary good temper, can fail of pleaſing, if he has the courage to utter his real ſentiments as he feels them, and becauſe he feels them. It is this unreſerved ſincerity which renders even the prattle of a child agreeable. How weak and imperfect ſoever the views of the open-hearted, we take pleaſure to enter into them, and endeavour, as much as we can, to bring down our own underſtanding to the level of their capacities, and to regard every ſubject in the particular light in which they appear to have conſidered it. This paſſion to diſcover the real ſentiments of others is naturally ſo ſtrong, that it often degenerates into a troubleſome and impertinent curioſity to pry into thoſe ſecrets of our neighbours which they have very juſtifiable reaſons for concealing; and, upon many occaſions, it requires prudence and a ſtrong ſenſe of propriety to govern this, as well as all the other paſſions of human nature, and to reduce it to that pitch which any impartial ſpectator can approve of. To diſappoint this curioſity, however, when it is kept within pro-

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per bounds, and aims at nothing which there can be any juſt reaſon for concealing, is equally diſagreeable in its turn. The man who eludes our moſt innocent queſtions, who gives no ſatisfaction to our moſt inoffenſive inquiries, who plainly wraps himſelf up in impenetrable obſcurity, ſeems, as it were, to build a wall about his breaſt. We run forward to get within it, with all the eagerneſs of harmleſs curioſity; and feel ourſelves all at once puſhed back with the rudeſt and moſt offenſive violence.

The man of reſerve and concealment though ſeldom a very amiable character, is not diſreſpected or deſpiſed. He ſeems to feel coldly towards us, and we feel as coldly towards him. He is not much praiſed or beloved, but he is as little hated or blamed. He very ſeldom, however, has occaſion to repent of his caution, and is generally diſpoſed rather to value himſelf upon the prudence of his reſerve. Though his conduct, therefore, may have been very faulty, and ſometimes even hurtful, he can very ſeldom be diſpoſed to lay his caſe before the

caſuiſts, or to fancy that he has any occaſion for their acquittal or approbation.

It is not always ſo with the man, who, from falſe information, from inadvertency, from precipitancy and raſhneſs, has involuntarily deceived. Though it ſhould be in a matter of little conſequence, in telling a piece of common news, for example, if he is a real lover of truth, he is aſhamed of his own careleſſneſs, and never fails to embrace the firſt opportunity of making the fulleſt acknowledgments. If it is in a matter of ſome conſequence, his contrition is ſtill greater; and if any unlucky or fatal conſequence has followed from his miſinformation, he can ſcarce ever forgive himſelf. Though not guilty, he feels himſelf to be in the higheſt degree, what the ancients called, piacular, and is anxious and eager to make every ſort of atonement in his power. Such a perſon might frequently be diſpoſed to lay his caſe before the caſuiſts, who have in general been very favourable to him, and though they have ſometimes juſtly condemned him for raſhneſs,

neſs, they have univerſally acquitted him of the ignominy of falſehood.

But the man who had the moſt frequent occaſion to conſult them, was the man of equivocation and mental reſervation, the man who ſeriouſly and deliberately meant to deceive, but who, at the ſame time, wiſhed to flatter himſelf that he had really told the truth. With him they have dealt variouſly. When they approved very much of the motives of his deceit, they have ſometimes acquitted him, though, to do them juſtice, they have in general and much more frequently condemned him.

The chief ſubjects of the works of the caſuiſts, therefore, were the conſcientious regard that is due to the rules of juſtice; how far we ought to reſpect the life and property of our neighbour; the duty of reſtitution; the laws of chaſtity and modeſty, and wherein conſiſted what, in their language, are called the ſins of concupiſcence; the rules of veracity, and the obligation of oaths, promiſes, and contracts of all kinds.

It may be ſaid in general of the works of the caſuiſts, that they attempted, to no purpoſe, to direct by preciſe rules what it belongs to feeling and ſentiment only to judge of. How is it poſſible to aſcertain by rules the exact point at which, in every caſe, a delicate ſenſe of juſtice begins to run into a frivolous and weak ſcrupuloſity of conſcience? When it is that ſecrecy and reſerve begin to grow into diſſimulation? How far an agreeable irony may be carried, and at what preciſe point it begins to degenerate into a deteſtable lie? What is the higheſt pitch of freedom and eaſe of behaviour which can be regarded as graceful and becoming, and when it is that it firſt begins to run into a negligent and thoughtleſs licentiouſneſs? With regard to all ſuch matters, what would hold good in any one caſe would ſcarce do ſo exactly in any other, and what conſtitutes the propriety and happineſs of behaviour varies in every caſe with the ſmalleſt variety of ſituation. Books of caſuiſtry, therefore, are generally as uſeleſs as they are commonly tireſome. They could be of little uſe to one who

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ſhould conſult them upon occaſion, even ſuppoſing their deciſions to be juſt; becauſe, notwithſtanding the multitude of caſes collected in them, yet upon account of the ſtill greater variety of poſſible circumſtances, it is a chance, if among all thoſe caſes there be found one exactly parallel to that under conſideration. One, who is really anxious to do his duty, muſt be very weak, if he can imagine that he has much occaſion for them; and with regard to one who is negligent of it, the ſtyle of thoſe writings is not ſuch as is likely to awaken him to more attention. None of them tend to animate us to what is generous and noble. None of them tend to ſoften us to what is gentle and humane. Many of them, on the contrary, tend rather to teach us to chicane with our own conſciences, and by their vain ſubtilties ſerve to authoriſe innumerable evaſive refinements with regard to the moſt eſſential articles of our duty. That frivolous accuracy which they attempted to introduce into ſubjects which do not admit of it, almoſt neceſſarily betrayed them into thoſe dangerous errors, and at the ſame time rendered

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their works dry and diſagreeable, abounding in abſtruſe and metaphyſical diſtinctions, but incapable of exciting in the heart any of thoſe emotions which it is the principal uſe of books of morality to excite.

The two uſeful parts of moral philoſophy, therefore, are Ethics and Juriſprudence: caſuiſtry ought to be rejected altogether; and the ancient moraliſts appear to have judged much better, who in treating of the ſame ſubjects, did not affect any ſuch nice exactneſs, but contented themſelves with deſcribing, in a general manner, what is the ſentiment upon which juſtice, modeſty, and veracity are founded, and what is the ordinary way of acting to which thoſe virtues would commonly prompt us.

Something, indeed, not unlike the doctrine of the caſuiſts, ſeems to have been attempted by ſeveral philoſophers. There is ſomething of this kind in the third book of Cicero's Offices, where he endeavours like a caſuiſt to give rules for our conduct in many nice caſes, in which it is difficult to determine

determine whereabouts the point of propriety may lie. It appears too, from many paſſages in the ſame book, that ſeveral other philoſophers had attempted ſomething of the ſame kind before him. Neither he nor they, however, appear to have aimed at giving a complete ſyſtem of this ſort, but only meant to ſhow how ſituations may occur, in which it is doubtful, whether the higheſt propriety of conduct conſiſts in obſerving or in receding from what, in ordinary caſes, are the rules of duty.

Every ſyſtem of poſitive law may be regarded as a more or leſs imperfect attempt towards a ſyſtem of natural juriſprudence, or towards an enumeration of the particular rules of juſtice. As the violation of juſtice is what men will never ſubmit to from one another, the public magiſtrate is under a neceſſity of employing the power of the commonwealth to enforce the practice of this virtue. Without this precaution, civil ſociety would become a ſcene of bloodſhed and diſorder, every man revenging himſelf at his own hand whenever he fancied he

was injured. To prevent the confuſion which would attend upon every man's doing juſtice to himſelf, the magiſtrate, in all governments that have acquired any conſiderable authority, undertakes to do juſtice to all, and promiſes to hear and to redreſs every complaint of injury. In all well-governed ſtates too, not only judges are appointed for determining the controverſies of individuals, but rules are preſcribed for regulating the deciſions of thoſe judges; and theſe rules are, in general, intended to coincide with thoſe of natural juſtice. It does not, indeed, always happen that they do ſo in every inſtance. Sometimes what is called the conſtitution of the ſtate, that is, the intereſt of the government; ſometimes the intereſt of particular orders of men who tyrannize the government, warp the poſitive laws of the country from what natural juſtice would preſcribe. In ſome countries, the rudeneſs and barbariſm of the people hinder the natural ſentiments of juſtice from arriving at that accuracy and preciſion which, in more civilized nations, they naturally attain to. Their laws are, like their

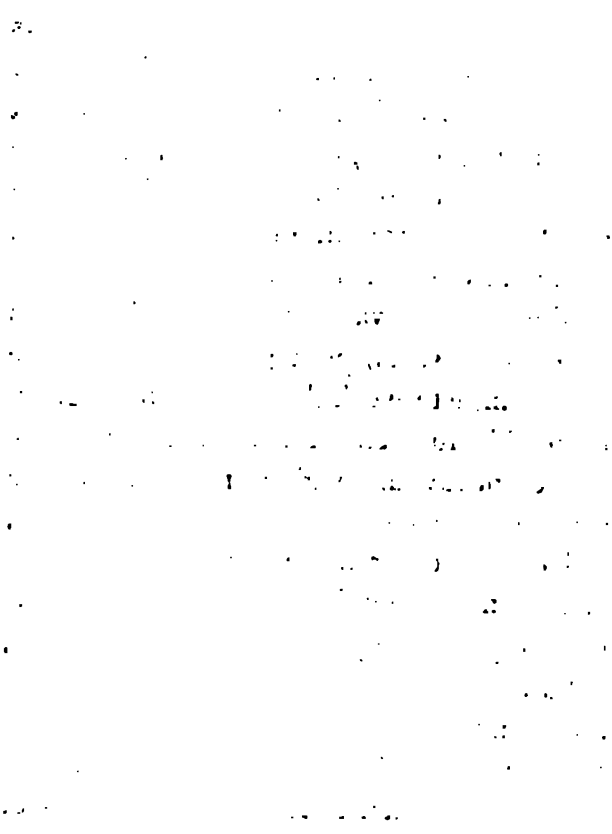
manners, groſs and rude and undiſtinguiſhing. In other countries the unfortunate conſtitution of their courts of judicature hinders any regular ſyſtem of juriſprudence from ever eſtabliſhing itſelf among them, though the improved manners of the people may be ſuch as would admit of the moſt accurate. In no country do the deciſions of poſitive law coincide exactly, in every caſe, with the rules which the natural ſenſe of juſtice would dictate. Syſtems of poſitive law, therefore, though they deſerve the greateſt authority, as the records of the ſentiments of mankind in different ages and nations, yet can never be regarded as accurate ſyſtems of the rules of natural juſtice.

It might have been expected that the reaſonings of lawyers, upon the different imperfections and improvements of the laws of different countries, ſhould have given occaſion to an inquiry into what were the natural rules of juſtice independent of all poſitive inſtitution. It might have been expected that theſe reaſonings ſhould have led

led them to aim at eſtabliſhing a ſyſtem of what might properly be called natural juriſprudence, or a theory of the general principles which ought to run through and be the foundation of the laws of all nations. But though the reaſonings of lawyers did produce ſomething of this kind, and though no man has treated ſyſtematically of the laws of any particular country, without intermixing in his work many obſervations of this ſort; it was very late in the world before any ſuch general ſyſtem was thought of, or before the philoſophy of law was treated of by itſelf, and without regard to the particular inſtitutions of any one nation. In none of the ancient moraliſts, do we find any attempt towards a particular enumeration of the rules of juſtice. Cicero in his Offices, and Ariſtotle in his Ethics, treat of juſtice in the ſame general manner in which they treat of all the other virtues. In the laws of Cicero and Plato, where we might naturally have expected ſome attempts towards an enumeration of thoſe rules of natural equity, which ought to be enforced by the poſitive laws of every country,

country, there is, however, nothing of this kind. Their laws are laws of police, not of juſtice. Grotius ſeems to have been the firſt who attempted to give the world any thing like a ſyſtem of thoſe principles which ought to run through, and be the foundation of the laws of all nations; and his treatiſe of the laws of war and peace, with all its imperfections, is perhaps at this day the moſt complete work that has yet been given upon this ſubject. I ſhall in another diſcourſe endeavour to give an account of the general principles of law and government, and of the different revolutions they have undergone in the different ages and periods of ſociety, not only in what concerns juſtice, but in what concerns police, revenue, and arms, and whatever elſe is the object of law. I ſhall not, therefore, at preſent enter into any further detail concerning the hiſtory of juriſprudence.

THE END.



CONSIDERATIONS

CONCERNING THE FIRST

FORMATION OF LANGUAGES,

AND THE

Different Genius of original and compounded

LANGUAGES.

CONSIDERATIONS

CONCERNING THE FIRST

FORMATION OF LANGUAGES,

&c. &c.

THE aſſignation of particular names, to denote particular objects, that is, the inſtitution of nouns ſubſtantive, would probably, be one of the firſt ſteps towards the formation of language. Two ſavages, who had never been taught to ſpeak, but had been bred up remote from the ſocieties of men, would naturally begin to form that language by which they would endeavour to make their mutual wants intelligible to each other, by uttering certain ſounds, whenever they meant to denote certain objects. Thoſe objects only which were moſt fami-

liar to them, and which they had moſt frequent occaſion to mention, would have particular names aſſigned to them. The particular cave whoſe covering ſheltered them from the weather, the particular tree whoſe fruit relieved their hunger, the particular fountain whoſe water allayed their thirſt, would firſt be denominated by the words *cave*, *tree*, *fountain*, or by whatever other appellations they might think proper, in that primitive jargon, to mark them. Afterwards, when the more enlarged experience of theſe ſavages had led them to obſerve, and their neceſſary occaſions obliged them to make mention of other caves, and other trees, and other fountains, they would naturally beſtow, upon each of thoſe new objects, the ſame name, by which they had been accuſtomed to expreſs the ſimilar object they were firſt acquainted with. The new objects had none of them any name of its own, but each of them exactly reſembled another object, which had ſuch an appellation. It was impoſſible that thoſe ſavages could behold the new

new objects, without recollecting the old ones; and the name of the old ones, to which the new bore ſo cloſe a reſemblance. When they had occaſion, therefore, to mention, or to point out to each other, any of the new objects, they would naturally utter the name of the correſpondent old one, of which the idea could not fail, at that inſtant, to preſent itſelf to their memory in the ſtrongeſt and livelieſt manner. And thus, thoſe words, which were originally the proper names of individuals, would each of them inſenſibly become the common name of a multitude. A child that is juſt learning to ſpeak, calls every perſon who comes to the houſe its papa, or its mama; and thus beſtows upon the whole ſpecies thoſe names which it had been taught to apply to two individuals. I have known a clown, who did not know the proper name of the river which ran by his own door. It was *the river*, he ſaid, and he never heard any other name for it. His experience, it ſeems, had not led him to obſerve any other river. The general word *river*, therefore, was, it is evident, in his acceptance of it, a proper name ſignifying

fying an individual object. If this perſon had been carried to another river, would he not readily have called it a river? Could we ſuppoſe any perſon living on the banks of the Thames ſo ignorant, as not to know the general word *river*, but to be acquainted only with the particular word *Thames*, if he was brought to any other river, would he not readily call it *a Thames?* This, in reality, is no more than what they, who are well acquainted with the general word, are very apt to do. An Engliſhman, deſcribing any great river which he may have ſeen in ſome foreign country, naturally ſays, that it is another Thames. The Spaniards, when they firſt arrived upon the coaſt of Mexico, and obſerved the wealth, populouſneſs, and habitations of that fine country, ſo much ſuperior to the ſavage nations which they had been viſiting for ſome time before, cried out, that it was another Spain. Hence it was called New Spain; and this name has ſtuck to that unfortunate country ever ſince. We ſay, in the ſame manner, of a hero, that he is an Alexander; of an orator, that he is a Cicero; of a phi-

ſopher, that he is a Newton. This way of ſpeaking, which the grammarians call an Antonomaſia, and which is ſtill extremely common, though now not at all neceſſary, demonſtrates how much mankind are naturally diſpoſed to give to one object the name of any other, which nearly reſembles it, and thus to denominate a multitude, by what originally was intended to expreſs an individual.

It is this application of the name of an individual to a great multitude of objects, whoſe reſemblance naturally recalls the idea of that individual, and of the name which expreſſes it, that ſeems originally to have given occaſion to the formation of thoſe claſſes and aſſortments, which, in the ſchools, are called genera and ſpecies, and of which the ingenious and eloquent M. Rouſſeau of Geneva * finds himſelf ſo much at a loſs to account for the origin. What conſtitutes a ſpecies is merely a number of objects, bearing a

* Origine de l'Inegalité. Partie Premiere, p. 376, 377. Edition d'Amſterdam des Oeuvres diverſes de J. J. Rouſſeau.

certain degree of reſemblance to one another, and on that account denominated by a ſingle appellation, which may be applied to expreſs any one of them.

When the greater part of objects had thus been arranged under their proper claſſes and aſſortments, diſtinguiſhed by ſuch general names, it was impoſſible that the greater part of that almoſt infinite number of individuals, comprehended under each particular aſſortment or ſpecies, could have any peculiar or proper names of their own, diſtinct from the general name of the ſpecies. When there was occaſion, therefore, to mention any particular object, it often became neceſſary to diſtinguiſh it from the other objects comprehended under the ſame general name, either, firſt, by its peculiar qualities; or, ſecondly, by the peculiar relation which it ſtood in to ſome other things. Hence the neceſſary origin of two other ſets of words, of which the one ſhould expreſs quality; the other, relation.

Nouns adjective are the words which expreſs quality conſidered as qualifying, or,

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as the ſchoolmen ſay, in concrete with, ſome particular ſubject. Thus the word *green* expreſſes a certain quality conſidered as qualifying, or as in concrete with, the particular ſubject to which it may be applied. Words of this kind, it is evident, may ſerve to diſtinguiſh particular objects from others comprehended under the ſame general appellation. The words *green tree*, for example, might ſerve to diſtinguiſh a particular tree from others that were withered or blaſted.

Prepoſitions are the words which expreſs relation conſidered, in the ſame manner, in concrete with the co-relative object. Thus the prepoſitions *of*, *to*, *for*, *with*, *by*, *above*, *below*, &c. denote ſome relation ſubſiſting between the objects expreſſed by the words between which the prepoſitions are placed; and they denote that this relation is conſidered in concrete with the co-relative object. Words of this kind ſerve to diſtinguiſh particular objects from others of the ſame ſpecies, when thoſe particular objects cannot be ſo properly marked out by any peculiar

culiar qualities of their own. When we ſay, *the green tree of the meadow*, for example, we diſtinguiſh a particular tree, not only by the quality which belongs to it, but by the relation which it ſtands in to another object.

As neither quality nor relation can exiſt in abſtract, it is natural to ſuppoſe that the words which denote them conſidered in concrete, the way in which we always ſee them ſubſiſt, would be of much earlier invention than thoſe which expreſs them conſidered in abſtract, the way in which we never ſee them ſubſiſt. The words *green* and *blue* would, in all probability, be ſooner invented than the words *greenneſs* and *blueneſs;* the words *above* and *below*, than the words *ſuperiority* and *inferiority*. To invent words of the latter kind requires a much greater effort of abſtraction than to invent thoſe of the former. It is probable, therefore, that ſuch abſtract terms would be of much later inſtitution. Accordingly, their etymologies generally ſhew that they are ſo, they being generally derived from others that are concrete.

But

But though the invention of nouns adjective be much more natural than that of the abſtract nouns ſubſtantive derived from them, it would ſtill, however, require a conſiderable degree of abſtraction and generalization. Thoſe, for example, who firſt invented the words *green*, *blue*, *red*, and the other names of colours, muſt have obſerved and compared together a great number of objects, muſt have remarked their reſemblances and diſſimilitudes in reſpect of the quality of colour, and muſt have arranged them, in their own minds, into different claſſes and aſſortments, according to thoſe reſemblances and diſſimilitudes. An adjective is by nature a general, and in ſome meaſure an abſtract word, and neceſſarily preſuppoſes the idea of a certain ſpecies or aſſortment of things, to all of which it is equally applicable. The word *green* could not, as we were ſuppoſing might be the caſe of the word *cave*, have been originally the name of an individual, and afterwards have become, by what grammarians call an Antonomaſia, the name of a ſpecies. The word *green* denoting, not the name of a ſubſtance,

ſubſtance, but the peculiar quality of a ſubſtance, muſt from the very firſt have been a general word, and conſidered as equally applicable to any other ſubſtance poſſeſſed of the ſame quality. The man who firſt diſtinguiſhed a particular object by the epithet of *green*, muſt have obſerved other objects that were not *green*, from which he meant to ſeparate it by this appellation. The inſtitution of this name, therefore, ſuppoſes compariſon. It likewiſe ſuppoſes ſome degree of abſtraction. The perſon who firſt invented this appellation muſt have diſtinguiſhed the quality from the object to which it belonged, and muſt have conceived the object as capable of ſubſiſting without the quality. The invention, therefore, even of the ſimpleſt nouns adjective, muſt have required more metaphyſics than we are apt to be aware of. The different mental operations, of arrangement or claſſing, of compariſon, and of abſtraction, muſt all have been employed, before even the names of the different colours, the leaſt metaphyſical of all nouns adjective, could be inſtituted.

tuted. From all which I infer, that when languages were beginning to be formed, nouns adjective would by no means be the words of the earlieſt invention.

There is another expedient for denoting the different qualities of different ſubſtances, which as it requires no abſtraction, nor any conceived ſeparation of the quality from the ſubject, ſeems more natural than the invention of nouns adjective, and which, upon this account, could hardly fail, in the firſt formation of language, to be thought of before them. This expedient is to make ſome variation upon the noun ſubſtantive itſelf, according to the different qualities which it is endowed with. Thus, in many languages, the qualities both of ſex and of the want of ſex, are expreſſed by different terminations in the nouns ſubſtantive, which denote objects ſo qualified. In Latin, for example, *lupus*, *lupa*; *equus*, *equa*; *juvencus*, *juvenca*; *Julius*, *Julia*; *Lucretius*, *Lucretia*, &c. denote the qualities of male and female in the animals and perſons to whom ſuch appellations belong, without needing the

the addition of any adjective for this purpoſe. On the other hand, the words *forum*, *pratum*, *plauſtrum*, denote by their peculiar termination the total abſence of ſex in the different ſubſtances which they ſtand for. Both ſex, and the want of all ſex, being naturally conſidered as qualities modifying and inſeparable from the particular ſubſtances to which they belong, it was natural to expreſs them rather by a modification in the noun ſubſtantive, than by any general and abſtract word expreſſive of this particular ſpecies of quality. The expreſſion bears, it is evident, in this way, a much more exact analogy to the idea or object which it denotes, than in the other. The quality appears, in nature, as a modification of the ſubſtance, and as it is thus expreſſed, in language, by a modification of the noun ſubſtantive, which denotes that ſubſtance, the quality and the ſubject are, in this caſe, blended together, if I may ſay ſo, in the expreſſion, in the ſame manner as they appear to be in the object and in the idea. Hence the origin of the maſculine, feminine, and neutral genders, in

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all the ancient languages. By means of theſe the moſt important of all diſtinctions, that of ſubſtances into animated and inanimated, and that of animals into male and female, ſeem to have been ſufficiently marked without the aſſiſtance of adjectives, or of any general names denoting this moſt extenſive ſpecies of qualifications.

There are no more than theſe three genders in any of the languages with which I am acquainted; that is to ſay, the formation of nouns ſubſtantive can, by itſelf, and without the accompaniment of adjectives, expreſs no other qualities but thoſe three above mentioned, the qualities of male, of female, of neither male nor female. I ſhould not, however, be ſurpriſed, if, in other languages with which I am unacquainted, the different formations of nouns ſubſtantive ſhould be capable of expreſſing many other different qualities. The different diminutives of the Italian, and of ſome other languages, do, in reality, ſometimes, expreſs a great variety of different modifications in the ſubſtances denoted by thoſe nouns which undergo ſuch variations.

It was impoſſible, however, that nouns ſubſtantive could, without loſing altogether their original form, undergo ſo great a number of variations, as would be ſufficient to expreſs that almoſt infinite variety of qualities, by which it might, upon different occaſions, be neceſſary to ſpecify and diſtinguiſh them. Though the different formation of nouns ſubſtantive, therefore, might, for ſome time, foreſtall the neceſſity of inventing nouns adjective, it was impoſſible that this neceſſity could be foreſtalled altogether. When nouns adjective came to be invented, it was natural that they ſhould be formed with ſome ſimilarity to the ſubſtantives to which they were to ſerve as epithets or qualifications. Men would naturally give them the ſame terminations with the ſubſtantives to which they were firſt applied, and from that love of ſimilarity of ſound, from that delight in the returns of the ſame ſyllables, which is the foundation of analogy in all languages, they would be apt to vary the termination of the ſame adjective, according as they had occaſion to apply it to a maſculine, to

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a feminine, or to a neutral ſubſtantive. They would ſay, *magnus lupus*, *magna lupa*, *magnum pratum*, when they meant to expreſs a great *he wolf*, a great *ſhe wolf*, a great *meadow*.

This variation, in the termination of the noun adjective, according to the gender of the ſubſtantive, which takes place in all the ancient languages, ſeems to have been introduced chiefly for the ſake of a certain ſimilarity of ſound, of a certain ſpecies of rhyme, which is naturally ſo very agreeable to the human ear. Gender, it is to be obſerved, cannot properly belong to a noun adjective, the ſignification of which is always preciſely the ſame, to whatever ſpecies of ſubſtantives it is applied. When we ſay, *a great man*, *a great woman*, the word *great* has preciſely the ſame meaning in both caſes, and the difference of the ſex in the ſubjects to which it may be applied, makes no ſort of difference in its ſignification. *Magnus*, *magna*, *magnum*, in the ſame manner, are words which expreſs preciſely the ſame quality, and the change

of the termination is accompanied with no ſort of variation in the meaning. Sex and gender are qualities which belong to ſubſtances, but cannot belong to the qualities of ſubſtances. In general, no quality, when conſidered in concrete, or as qualifying ſome particular ſubject, can itſelf be conceived as the ſubject of any other quality; though when conſidered in abſtract it may. No adjective therefore can qualify any other adjective. A *great good man*, means a man who is both *great* and *good*. Both the adjectives qualify the ſubſtantive; they do not qualify one another. On the other hand, when we ſay, the *great goodneſs* of the man, the word *goodneſs* denoting a quality conſidered in abſtract, which may itſelf be the ſubject of other qualities, is upon that account capable of being qualified by the word *great*.

If the original invention of nouns adjective would be attended with ſo much difficulty, that of prepoſitions would be accompanied with yet more. Every prepoſition, as I have already obſerved, denotes ſome re-

lation conſidered in concrete with the co-relative object. The prepoſition *above*, for example, denotes the relation of ſuperiority, not in abſtract, as it is expreſſed by the word *ſuperiority*, but in concrete with ſome co-relative object. In this phraſe, for example, *the tree above the cave*, the word *above* expreſſes a certain relation between the *tree* and the *cave*, and it expreſſes this relation in concrete with the co-relative object, *the cave*. A prepoſition always requires, in order to complete the ſenſe, ſome other word to come after it; as may be obſerved in this particular inſtance. Now, I ſay, the original invention of ſuch words would require a yet greater effort of abſtraction and generalization, than that of nouns adjective. Firſt of all, a relation is, in itſelf, a more metaphyſical object than a quality. Nobody can be at a loſs to explain what is meant by a quality; but few people will find themſelves able to expreſs, very diſtinctly, what is underſtood by a relation. Qualities are almoſt always the objects of our external ſenſes; relations never are. No wonder, therefore, that the one ſet of

objects ſhould be ſo much more comprehenſible than the other. Secondly, though prepoſitions always expreſs the relation which they ſtand for, in concrete with the co-relative object, they could not have originally been formed without a conſiderable effort of abſtraction. A prepoſition denotes a relation, and nothing but a relation. But before men could inſtitute a word, which ſignified a relation, and nothing but a relation, they muſt have been able, in ſome meaſure, to conſider this relation abſtractedly from the related objects; ſince the idea of thoſe objects does not, in any reſpect, enter into the ſignification of the prepoſition. The invention of ſuch a word, therefore, muſt have required a conſiderable degree of abſtraction. Thirdly, a prepoſition is from its nature a general word, which, from its very firſt inſtitution, muſt have been conſidered as equally applicable to denote any other ſimilar relation. The man who firſt invented the word *above*, muſt not only have diſtinguiſhed, in ſome meaſure, the relation of *ſuperiority* from the objects which were ſo related,

related, but he muſt alſo have diſtinguiſhed this relation from other relations, ſuch as, from the relation of *inferiority* denoted by the word *below*, from the relation of *juxtapoſition*, expreſſed by the word *beſide*, and the like. He muſt have conceived this word, therefore, as expreſſive of a particular ſort or ſpecies of relation diſtinct from every other, which could not be done without a conſiderable effort of compariſon and generalization.

Whatever were the difficulties, therefore, which embarraſſed the firſt invention of nouns adjective, the ſame, and many more, muſt have embarraſſed that of prepoſitions. If mankind, therefore, in the firſt formation of languages, ſeem to have, for ſome time, evaded the neceſſity of nouns adjective, by varying the termination of the names of ſubſtances, according as theſe varied in ſome of their moſt important qualities, they would much more find themſelves under the neceſſity of evading, by ſome ſimilar contrivance, the yet more difficult invention of prepoſitions. The

different caſes in the ancient languages is a contrivance of preciſely the ſame kind. The genitive and dative caſes, in Greek and Latin, evidently ſupply the place of the prepoſitions; and by a variation in the noun ſubſtantive, which ſtands for the co-relative term, expreſs the relation which ſubſiſts between what is denoted by that noun ſubſtantive, and what is expreſſed by ſome other word in the ſentence. In theſe expreſſions, for example, *fructus arboris*, *the fruit of the tree*; *ſacer Herculi*, *ſacred to Hercules*; the variations made in the co-relative words, *arbor* and *Hercules*, expreſs the ſame relations which are expreſſed in Engliſh by the prepoſitions *of* and *to*.

To expreſs a relation in this manner, did not require any effort of abſtraction. It was not here expreſſed by a peculiar word denoting relation and nothing but relation, but by a variation upon the co-relative term. It was expreſſed here, as it appears in nature, not as ſomething ſeparated and detached, but as thoroughly mixed and blended with the co-relative object.

To

To expreſs relation in this manner, did not require any effort of generalization. The words *arboris* and *Herculi*, while they involve in their ſignification the ſame relation expreſſed by the Engliſh prepoſitions *of* and *to*, are not like thoſe prepoſitions, general words, which can be applied to expreſs the ſame relation between whatever other objects it might be obſerved to ſubſiſt.

To expreſs relation in this manner did not require any effort of compariſon. The words *arboris* and *Herculi* are not general words intended to denote a particular ſpecies of relations which the inventors of thoſe expreſſions meant, in conſequence of ſome ſort of compariſon, to ſeparate and diſtinguiſh from every other ſort of relation. The example, indeed, of this contrivance would ſoon probably be followed, and whoever had occaſion to expreſs a ſimilar relation between any other objects would be very apt to do it by making a ſimilar variation on the name of the co-relative object. This, I ſay, would probably, or rather certainly

happen; but it would happen without any intention or foreſight in thoſe who firſt ſet the example, and who never meant to eſtabliſh any general rule. The general rule would eſtabliſh itſelf inſenſibly, and by ſlow degrees, in conſequence of that love of analogy and ſimilarity of ſound, which is the foundation of by far the greater part of the rules of grammar.

To expreſs relation, therefore, by a variation in the name of the co-relative object, requiring neither abſtraction, nor generalization, nor compariſon of any kind, would, at firſt, be much more natural and eaſy, than to expreſs it by thoſe general words called prepoſitions, of which the firſt invention muſt have demanded ſome degree of all thoſe operations.

The number of caſes is different in different languages. There are five in the Greek, ſix in the Latin, and there are ſaid to be ten in the Armenian language. It muſt have naturally happened that there ſhould be a greater or a ſmaller number of caſes,

caſes, according as in the terminations of nouns ſubſtantive the firſt formers of any language happened to have eſtabliſhed a greater or a ſmaller number of variations, in order to expreſs the different relations they had occaſion to take notice of, before the invention of thoſe more general and abſtract prepoſitions which could ſupply their place.

It is, perhaps, worth while to obſerve that thoſe prepoſitions, which in modern languages hold the place of the ancient caſes, are, of all others, the moſt general, and abſtract, and metaphyſical; and of conſequence would probably be the laſt invented. Aſk any man of common acuteneſs, What relation is expreſſed by the prepoſition *above?* He will readily anſwer, that of *ſuperiority*. By the prepoſition *below?* He will as quickly reply, that of *inferiority*. But aſk him, what relation is expreſſed by the prepoſition *of*, and, if he has not beforehand employed his thoughts a good deal upon theſe ſubjects, you may ſafely allow him a week to conſider of his anſwer.

anſwer. The prepoſitions *above* and *below* do not denote any of the relations expreſſed by the caſes in the ancient languages. But the prepoſition *of*, denotes the ſame relation, which is in them expreſſed by the genitive caſe; and which it is eaſy to obſerve, is of a very metaphyſical nature. The prepoſition *of*, denotes relation in general, conſidered in concrete with the co-relative object. It marks that the noun ſubſtantive which goes before it, is ſomehow or other related to that which comes after it, but without in any reſpect aſcertaining, as is done by the prepoſition *above*, what is the peculiar nature of that relation. We often apply it, therefore, to expreſs the moſt oppoſite relations; becauſe, the moſt oppoſite relations agree ſo far that each of them comprehends in it the general idea or nature of a relation. We ſay, *the father of the ſon*, and *the ſon of the father*; *the fir-trees of the foreſt*, and the *foreſt of the fir-trees*. The relation in which the father ſtands to the ſon, is, it is evident, a quite oppoſite relation to that in which the ſon ſtands to the father; that in which the parts ſtand to the whole,

whole, is quite oppoſite to that in which the whole ſtands to the parts. The word *of*, however, ſerves very well to denote all thoſe relations, becauſe in itſelf it denotes no particular relation, but only relation in general; and ſo far as any particular relation is collected from ſuch expreſſions, it is inferred by the mind, not from the prepoſition itſelf, but from the nature and arrangement of the ſubſtantives, between which the prepoſition is placed.

What I have ſaid concerning the prepoſition *of*, may in ſome meaſure be applied to the prepoſitions *to*, *for*, *with*, *by*, and to whatever other prepoſitions are made uſe of in modern languages, to ſupply the place of the ancient caſes. They all of them expreſs very abſtract and metaphyſical relations, which any man, who takes the trouble to try it, will find it extremely difficult to expreſs by nouns ſubſtantive, in the ſame manner as we may expreſs the relation denoted by the prepoſition *above*, by the noun ſubſtantive *ſuperiority*. They all of them, however, expreſs ſome ſpecific relation,

relation, and are, conſequently, none of them ſo abſtract as the prepoſition *of*, which may be regarded as by far the moſt metaphyſical of all prepoſitions. The prepoſitions, therefore, which are capable of ſupplying the place of the ancient caſes, being more abſtract than the other prepoſitions, would naturally be of more difficult invention. The relations at the ſame time which thoſe prepoſitions expreſs, are, of all others, thoſe which we have moſt frequent occaſion to mention. The prepoſitions *above*, *below*, *near*, *within*, *without*, *againſt*, &c. are much more rarely made uſe of, in modern languages, than the prepoſitions *of*, *to*, *for*, *with*, *from*, *by*. A prepoſition of the former kind will not occur twice in a page; we can ſcarce compoſe a ſingle ſentence without the aſſiſtance of one or two of the latter. If theſe latter prepoſitions, therefore, which ſupply the place of the caſes, would be of ſuch difficult invention on account of their abſtractedneſs, ſome expedient, to ſupply their place, muſt have been of indiſpenſable neceſſity, on account of the frequent occaſion which men have

to

to take notice of the relations which they denote. But there is no expedient ſo obvious, as that of varying the termination of one of the principal words.

It is, perhaps, unneceſſary to obſerve, that there are ſome of the caſes in the ancient languages, which, for particular reaſons, cannot be repreſented by any prepoſitions. Theſe are the nominative, accuſative, and vocative caſes. In thoſe modern languages which do not admit of any ſuch variety in the terminations of their nouns ſubſtantive, the correſpondent relations are expreſſed by the place of the words, and by the order and conſtruction of the ſentence.

As men have frequently ocaſion to make mention of multitudes as well as of ſingle objects, it became neceſſary that they ſhould have ſome method of expreſſing number. Number may be expreſſed either by a particular word, expreſſing number in general, ſuch as the words *many*, *more*, &c. or by ſome

numeral diſtinctions. But whether it expreſſed thoſe diſtinctions by three general words, or by variations upon the nouns ſubſtantive, denoting the things numbered, I do not remember to have met with any thing which could determine.

As all the ſame relations which ſubſiſt between ſingle may likewiſe ſubſiſt between numerous objects, it is evident there would be occaſion for the ſame number of caſes in the dual and in the plural, as in the ſingular number. Hence the intricacy and complexneſs of the declenſions in all the ancient languages. In the Greek there are five caſes in each of the three numbers, conſequently fifteen in all.

As nouns adjective, in the ancient languages, varied their terminations according to the gender of the ſubſtantive to which they were applied, ſo did they likewiſe, according to the caſe and the number. Every noun adjective in the Greek language, therefore, having three genders, and three numbers, and five caſes in each number, may

may be conſidered as having five and forty different variations. The firſt formers of language ſeem to have varied the termination of the adjective, according to the caſe and the number of the ſubſtantive, for the ſame reaſon which made them vary it according to the gender; the love of analogy, and of a certain regularity of ſound. In the ſignification of adjectives there is neither caſe nor number, and the meaning of ſuch words is always preciſely the ſame, notwithſtanding all the variety of termination under which they appear. *Magnus vir, magni viri, magnorum virorum, a great man, of a great man, of great men*; in all theſe expreſſions the words *magnus, magni, magnorum*, as well as the word *great*, have preciſely one and the ſame ſignification, though the ſubſtantives to which they are applied have not. The difference of termination in the noun adjective is accompanied with no ſort of difference in the meaning. An adjective denotes the qualification of a noun ſubſtantive. But the different relations in which that noun ſubſtantive may occaſionally ſtand, can make

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no ſort of difference upon its qualification.

If the declenſions of the ancient languages are ſo very complex, their conjugations are infinitely more ſo. And the complexneſs of the one is founded upon the ſame principle with that of the other, the difficulty of forming, in the beginnings of language, abſtract and general terms.

Verbs muſt neceſſarily have been coëval with the very firſt attempts towards the formation of language. No affirmation can be expreſſed without the aſſiſtance of ſome verb. We never ſpeak but in order to expreſs our opinion that ſomething either is or is not. But the word denoting this event, or this matter of fact, which is the ſubject of our affirmation, muſt always be a verb.

Impersonal verbs, which expreſs in one word a complete event, which preſerve in the expreſſion that perfect ſimplicity and unity, which there always is in the object and

and in the idea, and which ſuppoſe no abſtraction, or metaphyſical diviſion of the event into its ſeveral conſtituent members of ſubject and attribute, would, in all probability, be the ſpecies of verbs firſt invented. The verbs *pluit, it rains; ningit, it ſnows; tonat, it thunders; lucet, it is day; turbatur, there is a confuſion*, &c. each of them expreſs a complete affirmation, the whole of an event, with that perfect ſimplicity and unity with which the mind conceives it in nature. On the contrary, the phraſes, *Alexander ambulat, Alexander walks; Petrus ſedet, Peter ſits*, divide the event, as it were, into two parts, the perſon or ſubject, and the attribute, or matter of fact, affirmed of that ſubject. But in nature, the idea or conception of Alexander walking, is as perfectly and completely one ſimple conception, as that of Alexander not walking. The diviſion of this event, therefore, into two parts, is altogether artificial, and is the effect of the imperfection of language, which, upon this, as upon many other occaſions, ſupplies, by a number of words, the want of one, which could expreſs at once

the whole matter of fact that was meant to be affirmed. Every body muſt obſerve how much more ſimplicity there is in the natural expreſſion, *pluit*, than in the more artificial expreſſions, *imber decidit*, *the rain falls*; or *tempeſtas eſt pluvia*, *the weather is rainy*. In theſe two laſt expreſſions, the ſimple event, or matter of fact, is artificially ſplit and divided in the one, into two; in the other, into three parts. In each of them it is expreſſed by a ſort of grammatical circumlocution, of which the ſignificancy is founded upon a certain metaphyſical analyſis of the component parts of the idea expreſſed by the word *pluit*. The firſt verbs, therefore, perhaps even the firſt words, made uſe of in the beginnings of language, would in all probability be ſuch impersonal verbs. It is obſerved accordingly, I am told by the Hebrew grammarians, that the radical words of their language, from which all the others are derived, are all of them verbs, and impersonal verbs.

It is eaſy to conceive how, in the progreſs of language, thoſe impersonal verbs ſhould

ſhould become perſonal. Let us ſuppoſe, for example, that the word *venit*, *it comes*, was originally an impersonal verb, and that it denoted, not the coming of ſomething in general, as at preſent, but the coming of a particular object, ſuch as *the Lion*. The firſt ſavage inventors of language, we ſhall ſuppoſe, when they obſerved the approach of this terrible animal, were accuſtomed to cry out to one another, *venit*, that is, *the lion comes;* and that this word thus expreſſed a complete event, without the aſſiſtance of any other. Afterwards, when, on the further progreſs of language, they had begun to give names to particular ſubſtances, whenever they obſerved the approach of any other terrible object, they would naturally join the name of that object to the word *venit*, and cry out, *venit urſus*, *venit lupus*. By degrees the word *venit* would thus come to ſignify the coming of any terrible object, and not merely the coming of the lion. It would now, therefore, expreſs, not the coming of a particular object, but the coming of an object of a particular kind. Having become

more general in its ſignification, it could no longer repreſent any particular diſtinct event by itſelf, and without the aſſiſtance of a noun ſubſtantive, which might ſerve to aſcertain and determine its ſignification. It would now, therefore, have become, a perſonal, inſtead of an imperſonal verb. We may eaſily conceive how, in the further progreſs of ſociety, it might ſtill grow more general in its ſignification, and come to ſignify, as at preſent, the approach of any thing whatever, whether good, bad, or indifferent.

It is probably in ſome ſuch manner as this, that almoſt all verbs have become perſonal, and that mankind have learned by degrees to ſplit and divide almoſt every event into a great number of metaphyſical parts, expreſſed by the different parts of ſpeech, variouſly combined in the different members of every phraſe and ſentence*. The ſame ſort

* As the far greater part of verbs expreſs, at preſent, not an event, but the attribute of an event, and, conſequently, require a ſubject, or nominative caſe, to complete their ſignification, ſome grammarians, not having

ſort of progreſs ſeems to have been made in the art of ſpeaking as in the art of writing. When mankind firſt began to attempt to expreſs their ideas by writing, every character repreſented a whole word. But the number of words being almoſt infinite, the memory found itſelf quite loaded and oppreſſed by the multitude of characters which it was obliged to retain. Neceſſity taught them, therefore, to divide words into their elements, and to invent characters which ſhould repreſent, not the words themſelves, but the elements of which they were compoſed. In conſequence of this invention, every particular word came to be repreſented, not by one character, but by a mul-

having attended to this progreſs of nature, and being deſirous to make their common rules quite univerſal, and without any exception, have inſiſted that all verbs required a nominative, either expreſſed or underſtood; and have, accordingly, put themſelves to the torture to find ſome awkward nominatives to thoſe few verbs, which ſtill expreſſing a complete event, plainly admit of none. *Pluit*, for example, according to *Sanctius*, means *pluvia pluit*, in Engliſh, *the rain rains*. See Sanctii Minerva, l. 3. c. 1.

titude of characters; and the expreſſion of it in writing became much more intricate and complex than before. But though particular words were thus repreſented by a greater number of characters, the whole language was expreſſed by a much ſmaller, and about four and twenty letters were found capable of ſupplying the place of that immenſe multitude of characters, which were requiſite before. In the ſame manner, in the beginnings of language, men ſeem to have attempted to expreſs every particular event, which they had occaſion to take notice of, by a particular word, which expreſſed at once the whole of that event. But as the number of words muſt, in this caſe, have become really infinite, in conſequence of the really infinite variety of events, men found themſelves partly compelled by neceſſity, and partly conducted by nature, to divide every event into what may be called its metaphyſical elements, and to inſtitute words, which ſhould denote not ſo much the events, as the elements of which they were compoſed.

The

The expreſſion of every particular event, became in this manner more intricate and complex, but the whole ſyſtem of the language became more coherent, more connected, more eaſily retained and comprehended.

When verbs, from being originally impersonal, had thus, by the diviſion of the event into its metaphyſical elements, become perſonal, it is natural to ſuppoſe that they would firſt be made uſe of in the third perſon ſingular. No verb is ever uſed impersonally in our language, nor, ſo far as I know, in any other modern tongue. But in the ancient languages, whenever any verb is uſed impersonally, it is always in the third perſon ſingular. The termination of thoſe verbs, which are ſtill always impersonal, is conſtantly the ſame with that of the third perſon ſingular of perſonal verbs. The conſideration of theſe circumſtances, joined to the naturalneſs of the thing itſelf, may ſerve to convince us that verbs firſt became perſonal in what is now called the third perſon ſingular.

But

But as the event, or matter of fact, which is expreſſed by a verb, may be affirmed either of the perſon who ſpeaks, or of the perſon who is ſpoken to, as well as of ſome third perſon or object, it became neceſſary to fall upon ſome method of expreſſing theſe two peculiar relations of the event. In the Engliſh language this is commonly done, by prefixing, what are called the perſonal pronouns, to the general word which expreſſes the event affirmed. *I came*, *you came*, *he* or *it came*; in theſe phraſes the event of having come is, in the firſt, affirmed of the ſpeaker; in the ſecond, of the perſon ſpoken to; in the third, of ſome other perſon, or object. The firſt formers of language, it may be imagined, might have done the ſame thing, and prefixing in the ſame manner the two firſt perſonal pronouns, to the ſame termination of the verb, which expreſſed the third perſon ſingular, might have ſaid *ego venit*, *tu venit*, as well as *ille* or *illud venit*. And I make no doubt but they would have done ſo, if at the time when they had firſt occaſion to expreſs

preſs theſe relations of the verb, there had been any ſuch words as either *ego* or *tu* in their language. But in this early period of the language which we are now endeavouring to deſcribe, it is extremely improbable that any ſuch words would be known. Though cuſtom has now rendered them familiar to us, they, both of them, expreſs ideas extremely metaphyſical and abſtract. The word *I*, for example, is a word of a very particular ſpecies. Whatever ſpeaks may denote itſelf by this perſonal pronoun. The word *I*, therefore, is a general word, capable of being predicated, as the logicians ſay, of an infinite variety of objects. It differs, however, from all other general words in this reſpect; that the objects of which it may be predicated, do not form any particular ſpecies of objects diſtinguiſhed from all others. The word *I*, does not, like the word *man*, denote a particular claſs of objects, ſeparated from all others by peculiar qualities of their own. It is far from being the name of a ſpecies, but, on the contrary, whenever it is made uſe of, it always denotes a preciſe individual, the particular

particular perſon who then ſpeaks. It may be ſaid to be, at once, both what the logicians call, a ſingular, and what they call, a common term; and to join in its ſignification the ſeemingly oppoſite qualities of the moſt preciſe individuality, and the moſt extenſive generalization. This word, therefore, expreſſing ſo very abſtract and metaphyſical an idea, would not eaſily or readily occur to the firſt formers of language. What are called the perſonal pronouns, it may be obſerved, are among the laſt words of which children learn to make uſe. A child, ſpeaking of itſelf, ſays, *Billy walks*, *Billy ſits*, inſtead of *I walk*, *I ſit*. As in the beginnings of language, therefore, mankind ſeem to have evaded the invention of at leaſt the more abſtract prepoſitions, and to have expreſſed the ſame relations which theſe *now* ſtand for, by varying the termination of the co-relative term, ſo they likewiſe would naturally attempt to evade the neceſſity of inventing thoſe more abſtract pronouns by varying the termination of the verb, according as the event which it expreſſed was intended to be affirmed of the

the firſt, ſecond, or third perſon. This ſeems, accordingly, to be the univerſal practice of all the ancient languages. In Latin, *veni*, *veniſti*, *venit*, ſufficiently denote, without any other addition, the different events expreſſed by the Engliſh phraſes, *I came*, *you came*, *he* or *it came*. The verb would, for the ſame reaſon, vary its termination, according as the event was intended to be affirmed of the firſt, ſecond, or third perſons plural; and what is expreſſed by the Engliſh phraſes, *we came*, *ye came*, *they came*, would be denoted by the Latin words, *venimus*, *veniſtis*, *venerunt*. Thoſe primitive languages, too, which, upon account of the difficulty of inventing numeral names, had introduced a dual, as well as a plural number, into the declenſion of their nouns ſubſtantive, would probably, from analogy, do the ſame thing in the conjugations of their verbs. And thus in all thoſe original languages, we might expect to find, at leaſt ſix, if not eight or nine variations, in the termination of every verb, according as the event which it denoted was meant to be affirmed of the firſt, ſecond, or third

third perſons ſingular, dual, or plural. Theſe variations again being repeated, along with others, through all its different tenſes, through all its different modes, and through all its different voices, muſt neceſſarily have rendered their conjugations ſtill more intricate and complex than their declenſions.

Language would probably have continued upon this footing in all countries, nor would ever have grown more ſimple in its declenſions and conjugations, had it not become more complex in its compoſition, in conſequence of the mixture of ſeveral languages with one another, occaſioned by the mixture of different nations. As long as any language was ſpoke by thoſe only who learned it in their infancy, the intricacy of its declenſions and conjugations could occaſion no great embarraſſment. The far greater part of thoſe who had occaſion to ſpeak it, had accquired it at ſo very early a period of their lives, ſo inſenſibly and by ſuch ſlow degrees, that they were ſcarce ever ſenſible of the difficulty. But when two nations came to be mixed with one

one another, either by conqueſt or migration, the caſe would be very different. Each nation, in order to make itſelf intelligible to thoſe with whom it was under the neceſſity of converſing, would be obliged to learn the language of the other. The greater part of individuals too, learning the new language, not by art, or by remounting to its rudiments and firſt principles, but by rote, and by what they commonly heard in converſation, would be extremely perplexed by the intricacy of its declenſions and conjugations. They would endeavour, therefore, to ſupply their ignorance of theſe, by whatever ſhift the language could afford them. Their ignorance of the declenſions they would naturally ſupply by the uſe of prepoſitions; and a Lombard, who was attempting to ſpeak Latin, and wanted to expreſs that ſuch a perſon was a citizen of Rome, or a benefactor to Rome, if he happened not to be acquainted with the genitive and dative caſes of the word *Roma*, would naturally expreſs himſelf by prefixing the prepoſitions *ad* and *de* to the nominative; and, inſtead of *Romæ*, would ſay, *ad Roma*,

and

and *de Roma*. *Al Roma* and *di Roma*, accordingly, is the manner in which the preſent Italians, the deſcendants of the ancient Lombards and Romans, expreſs this and all other ſimilar relations. And in this manner prepoſitions ſeem to have been introduced, in the room of the ancient declenſions. The ſame alteration has, I am informed, been produced upon the Greek language, ſince the taking of Conſtantinople by the Turks. The words are, in a great meaſure, the ſame as before; but the grammar is entirely loſt, prepoſitions having come in the place of the old declenſions. This change is undoubtedly a ſimplification of the language, in point of rudiments and principle. It introduces, inſtead of a great variety of declenſions, one univerſal declenſion, which is the ſame in every word, of whatever gender, number, or termination.

A ſimilar expedient enables men, in the ſituation above-mentioned, to get rid of almoſt the whole intricacy of their conjugations. There is in every language a verb,

known by the name of the ſubſtantive verb; in Latin, *ſum*; in Engliſh, *I am*. This verb denotes not the exiſtence of any particular event, but exiſtence in general. It is, upon this account, the moſt abſtract and metaphyſical of all verbs; and conſequently, could by no means be a word of early invention. When it came to be invented, however, as it had all the tenſes and modes of any other verb, by being joined with the paſſive participle, it was capable of ſupplying the place of the whole paſſive voice, and of rendering this part of their conjugations as ſimple and uniform, as the uſe of prepoſitions had rendered their declenſions. A Lombard, who wanted to ſay, *I am loved*, but could not recollect the word *amor*, naturally endeavoured to ſupply his ignorance, by ſaying, *ego ſum amatus*. *Io ſono amato*, is at this day the Italian expreſſion, which correſponds to the Engliſh phraſe above mentioned.

There is another verb, which, in the ſame manner, runs through all languages, and which is diſtinguiſhed by the name of

the poſſeſſive verb; in Latin, *habeo;* in Engliſh, *I have.* This verb, likewiſe, denotes an event of an extremely abſtract and metaphyſical nature, and, conſequently, cannot be ſuppoſed to have been a word of the earlieſt invention. When it came to be invented, however, by being applied to the paſſive participle, it was capable of ſupplying a great part of the active voice, as the ſubſtantive verb had ſupplied the whole of the paſſive. A Lombard, who wanted to ſay, *I had loved*, but could not recollect the word *amaveram*, would endeavour to ſupply the place of it, by ſaying either *ego habebam amatum*, or *ego habui amatum. Io aveva amato*, or *Io ebbi amato*, are the correſpondent Italian expreſſions at this day. And thus upon the intermixture of different nations with one another, the conjugations, by means of different auxiliary verbs, were made to approach towards the ſimplicity and uniformity of the declenſions.

In general it may be laid down for a maxim, that the more ſimple any language is

is in its compoſition, the more complex it muſt be in its declenſions and conjugations; and on the contrary, the more ſimple it is in its declenſions and conjugations, the more complex it muſt be in its compoſition.

The Greek ſeems to be, in a great meaſure, a ſimple, uncompounded language, formed from the primitive jargon of thoſe wandering ſavages, the ancient Hellenians and Pelaſgians, from whom the Greek nation is ſaid to have been deſcended. All the words in the Greek language are derived from about three hundred primitives, a plain evidence that the Greeks formed their language almoſt entirely among themſelves, and that when they had occaſion for a new word, they were not accuſtomed, as we are, to borrow it from ſome foreign language, but to form it, either by compoſition, or derivation from ſome other word or words, in their own. The declenſions and conjugations, therefore, of the Greek are much more complex than thoſe of any

other European language with which I am acquainted.

The Latin is a compoſition of the Greek and of the ancient Tuſcan languages. Its declenſions and conjugations accordingly are much leſs complex than thoſe of the Greek; it has dropt the dual number in both. Its verbs have no optative mood diſtinguiſhed by any peculiar termination. They have but one future. They have no aoriſt diſtinct from the preterit-perfect; they have no middle voice; and even many of their tenſes in the paſſive voice are eked out, in the ſame manner as in the modern languages, by the help of the ſubſtantive verb joined to the paſſive participle. In both the voices, the number of infinitives and participles is much ſmaller in the Latin than in the Greek.

The French and Italian languages are each of them compounded, the one of the Latin, and the language of the ancient Franks, the other of the ſame Latin, and

the language of the ancient Lombards. As they are both of them, therefore, more complex in their compoſition than the Latin, ſo are they likewiſe more ſimple in their declenſions and conjugations. With regard to their declenſions, they have both of them loſt their caſes altogether; and with regard to their conjugations, they have both of them loſt the whole of the paſſive, and ſome part of the active voices of their verbs. The want of the paſſive voice they ſupply entirely by the ſubſtantive verb joined to the paſſive participle; and they make out part of the active, in the ſame manner by the help of the poſſeſſive verb and the ſame paſſive participle.

The Engliſh is compounded of the French and the ancient Saxon languages. The French was introduced into Britain by the Norman conqueſt, and continued, till the time of Edward III. to be the ſole language of the law as well as the principal language of the court. The Engliſh, which came to be ſpoken afterwards, and which continues to be ſpoken now, is a mixture

of the ancient Saxon and this Norman French. As the Engliſh language, therefore, is more complex in its compoſition than either the French or the Italian, ſo is it likewiſe more ſimple in its declenſions and conjugations. Thoſe two languages retain, at leaſt, a part of the diſtinction of genders, and their adjectives vary their termination according as they are applied to a maſculine or to a feminine ſubſtantive. But there is no ſuch diſtinction in the Engliſh language, whoſe adjectives admit of no variety of termination. The French and Italian languages have, both of them, the remains of a conjugation; and all thoſe tenſes of the active voice, which cannot be expreſſed by the poſſeſſive verb joined to the paſſive participle, as well as many of thoſe which can, are, in thoſe languages, marked by varying the termination of the principal verb. But almoſt all thoſe other tenſes are in the Engliſh eked out by other auxiliary verbs, ſo that there is in this language ſcarce even the remains of a conjugation. *I love*, *I loved*, *loving*, are all the varieties of termination which the greater part of Engliſh verbs

verbs admit of. All the different modifications of meaning, which cannot be expreſſed by any of thoſe three terminations, muſt be made out by different auxiliary verbs joined to ſome one or other of them. Two auxiliary verbs ſupply all the deficiencies of the French and Italian conjugations; it requires more than half a dozen to ſupply thoſe of the Engliſh, which, beſides the ſubſtantive and poſſeſſive verbs, makes uſe of *do*, *did*; *will*, *would*; *ſhall*, *ſhould*; *can*, *could*; *may*, *might*.

It is in this manner that language becomes more ſimple in its rudiments and principles, juſt in proportion as it grows more complex in its compoſition, and the ſame thing has happened in it, which commonly happens with regard to mechanical engines. All machines are generally, when firſt invented, extremely complex in their principles, and there is often a particular principle of motion for every particular movement which it is intended they ſhould perform. Succeeding improvers obſerve, that one principle may be ſo applied

as to produce ſeveral of thoſe movements; and thus the machine becomes gradually more and more ſimple, and produces its effects with fewer wheels, and fewer principles of motion. In language, in the ſame manner, every caſe of every noun, and every tenſe of every verb, was originally expreſſed by a particular diſtinct word, which ſerved for this purpoſe and for no other. But ſucceeding obſervation diſcovered, that one ſet of words was capable of ſupplying the place of all that infinite number, and that four or five prepoſitions, and half a dozen auxiliary verbs, were capable of anſwering the end of all the declenſions, and of all the conjugations in the ancient languages.

But this ſimplification of languages, though it ariſes, perhaps, from ſimilar cauſes, has by no means ſimilar effects with the correſpondent ſimplification of machines. The ſimplification of machines renders them more and more perfect, but this ſimplification of the rudiments of languages renders them more and more imperfect,

fect, and leſs proper for many of the purpoſes of language: and this for the following reaſons.

Firſt of all, languages are by this ſimplification rendered more prolix, ſeveral words having become neceſſary to expreſs what could have been expreſſed by a ſingle word before. Thus the words *Dei* and *Deo*, in the Latin, ſufficiently ſhow, without any addition, what relation the object ſignified is underſtood to ſtand in to the objects expreſſed by the other words in the ſentence. But to expreſs the ſame relation in Engliſh, and in all other modern languages, we muſt make uſe of, at leaſt, two words, and ſay, *of God*, *to God*. So far as the declenſions are concerned, therefore, the modern languages are much more prolix than the ancient. The difference is ſtill greater with regard to the conjugations. What a Roman expreſſed by the ſingle word, *amaviſſem*, an Engliſhman is obliged to expreſs by four different words, *I ſhould have loved*. It is unneceſſary to take any pains to ſhow how much this prolixneſs muſt enervate the eloquence

quence of all modern languages. How much the beauty of any expreſſion depends upon its conciſeneſs, is well known to thoſe who have any experience in compoſition.

Secondly, this ſimplification of the principles of languages renders them leſs agreeable to the ear. The variety of termination in the Greek and Latin, occaſioned by their declenſions and conjugations, gives a ſweetneſs to their language altogether unknown to ours, and a variety unknown to any other modern language. In point of ſweetneſs, the Italian, perhaps, may ſurpaſs the Latin, and almoſt equal the Greek; but in point of variety, it is greatly inferior to both.

Thirdly, this ſimpliſication, not only renders the ſounds of our language leſs agreeable to the ear, but it alſo reſtrains us from diſpoſing ſuch ſounds as we have, in the manner that might be moſt agreeable. It ties down many words to a particular ſituation, though they might often be placed in another with much more beauty. In the Greek

Greek and Latin, though the adjective and ſubſtantive were ſeparated from one another, the correſpondence of their terminations ſtill ſhowed their mutual reference, and the ſeparation did not neceſſarily occaſion any ſort of confuſion. Thus in the firſt line of Virgil,

Tityre tu patulæ recubans ſub tegmine fagi;

we eaſily ſee that *tu* refers to *recubans*, and *patulæ* to *fagi;* though the related words are ſeparated from one another by the intervention of ſeveral others; becauſe the terminations, ſhowing the correſpondence of their caſes, determine their mutual reference. But if we were to tranſlate this line literally into Engliſh, and ſay, *Tityrus, thou of ſpreading reclining under the ſhade beech*, OEdipus himſelf could not make ſenſe of it; becauſe there is here no difference of termination, to determine which ſubſtantive each adjective belongs to. It is the ſame caſe with regard to verbs. In Latin the verb may often be placed, without any inconveniency or ambiguity, in any part

part of the ſentence. But in Engliſh its place is almoſt always preciſely determined. It muſt follow the ſubjective and precede the objective member of the phraſe in almoſt all caſes. Thus in Latin whether you ſay, *Joannem verberavit Robertus*, or *Robertus verberavit Joannem*, the meaning is preciſely the ſame, and the termination fixes John to be the ſufferer in both caſes. But in Engliſh *John beat Robert*, and *Robert beat John*, have by no means the ſame ſignification. The place therefore of the three principal members of the phraſe is in the Engliſh, and for the ſame reaſon in the French and Italian languages, almoſt always preciſely determined; whereas in the ancient languages a greater latitude is allowed, and the place of thoſe members is often, in a great meaſure, indifferent. We muſt have recourſe to Horace, in order to interpret ſome parts of Milton's literal tranſlation;

> Who now enjoys thee credulous all gold,
> Who always vacant, always amiable
> Hopes thee; of flattering gales
> Unmindful—

are

are verſes which it is impoſſible to interpret by any rules of our language. There are no rules in our language, by which any man could diſcover, that, in the firſt line, *credulous* referred to *who*, and not to *thee*; or that *all gold* referred to any thing; or, that in the fourth line, *unmindful* referred to *who* in the ſecond, and not to *thee* in the third; or, on the contrary, that, in the ſecond line, *always vacant*, *always amiable*, referred to *thee* in the third, and not to *who* in the ſame line with it. In the Latin, indeed, all this is abundantly plain.

Qui nunc te fruitur credulus aureâ,
Qui ſemper vacuam, ſemper amabilem
Sperat te; neſcius auræ fallacis.

Becauſe the terminations in the Latin determine the reference of each adjective to its proper ſubſtantive, which it is impoſſible for any thing in the Engliſh to do. How much this power of tranſpoſing the order of their words muſt have facilitated the compoſition of the ancients, both in verſe and proſe, can hardly be imagined. That it muſt greatly have facilitated their verſi-

verſification it is needleſs to obſerve; and in proſe, whatever beauty depends upon the arrangement and conſtruction of the ſeveral members of the period, muſt to them have been acquirable with much more eaſe, and to much greater perfection, than it can be to thoſe whoſe expreſſion is conſtantly confined by the prolixneſs, conſtraint, and monotony of modern languages.

FINIS.

L. L. W.